

Win £5,000 of Lottery tickets

1,000 each for five runners-up
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No limit

Quentin Letts enjoys the right to speed
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Stay cool

Magnus Linklater on the joys of coping with heavy weather
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Football

Manchester United close gap on the leaders
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Cold weather cash for millions

Thousands are still cut off as snow spreads

By JILL SHERMAN, GILLIAN BOWDITCH AND JONATHAN PRYNN

TENS of millions of pounds have been promised to sick and elderly people across large areas of Britain as continuing Arctic conditions claimed at least three lives yesterday and disrupted transport.

The Government's £8.50 weekly cold weather payments go out automatically to those deemed vulnerable when temperatures fall to freezing or below for a seven-day period in a specific area.

They are made to three groups on income support: families with children under

sub-zero temperatures persisting through much of the country until the weekend.

Last night Opposition MPs called for the cold weather payment system to be reviewed to take into account the exceptionally low temperatures in Scotland and the North of England. Charities complained that many on income support would not be entitled to any cash.

George Foulkes, Labour MP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, called for a "double premium" when the temperature fell to -10C (14F) for 24 hours or longer. The chairman of the all-party pensioners' group said: "The weather is so severe that there ought to be some consideration about a double premium for when it gets below -10C degrees."

David Winnick, MP for Walsall North, also criticised the scheme, adding: "The Prime Minister should intervene to authorise payments in all areas of the country. The weather is sufficiently harsh and, therefore, these payments are certainly justified, modest as they are."

John Crowe, of the National Right to Fuel Campaign, said the number of poor households without help would outnumber those eligible for payments. "Any family receiving income support, with a child over five for example, will get nothing."

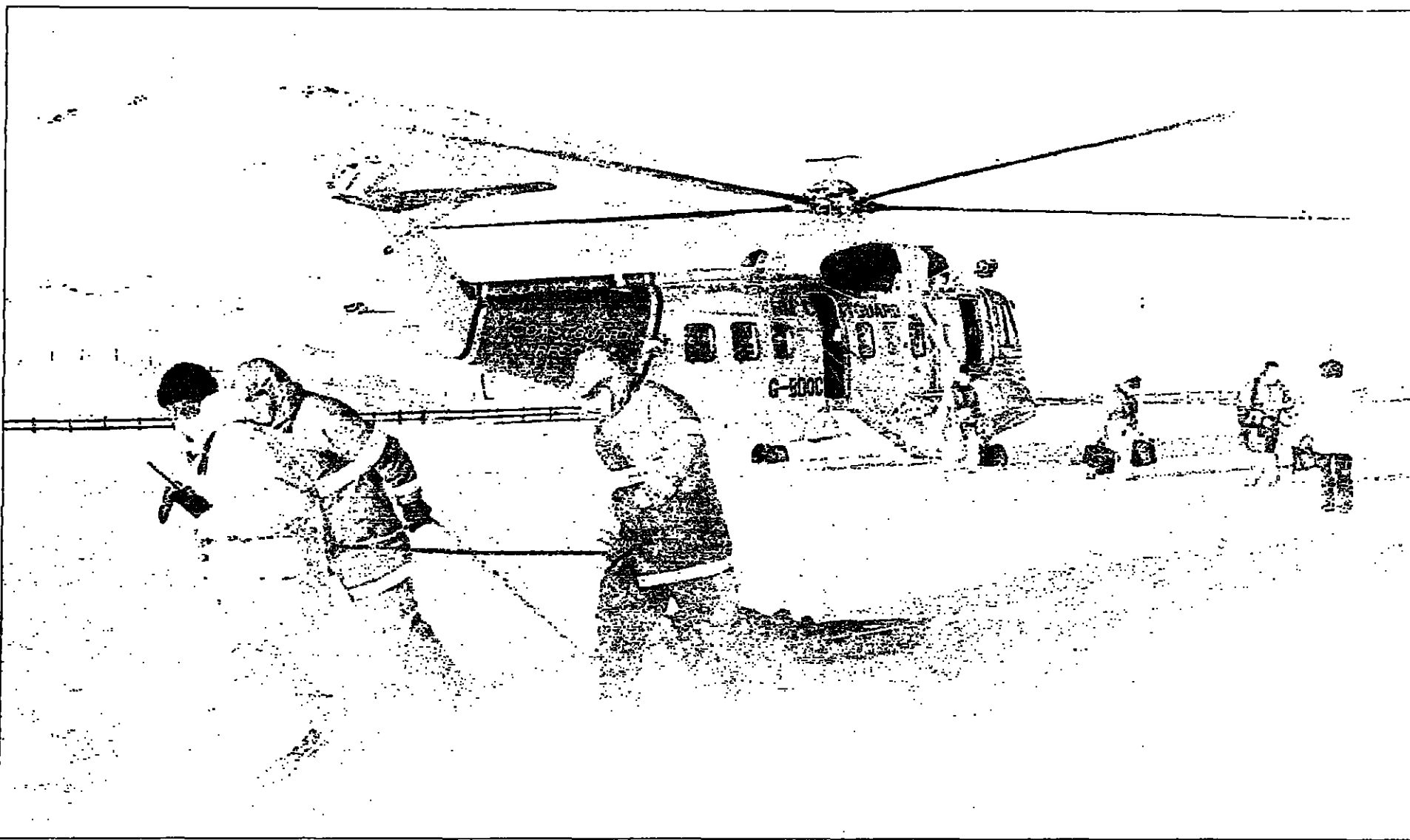
The Department of Social Security said last night that cold weather payments had so far been triggered in virtually all Scotland, Tyneside, Tees-

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five, the disabled, and pensioners. The payments, to a potential three million recipients, stop as soon as temperatures rise, although they can be paid for consecutive weeks. Some of the worst conditions during the current cold snap have been endured by those in Shetland and the Western Isles, where scores of households were still without power last night.

Most of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the east of England from the Scottish border as far south as Essex remained blanketed under snow yesterday after heavy falls on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day.

Snow showers are expected today in Essex and Kent with



Shetland coastguard rescuers taking a suspected hypothermia victim to hospital at Lerwick. There have been 12 such flights in the past two days

Birmingham, North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, West Midlands and Wiltshire.

Meanwhile, two children died in Co Durham after a lorry smashed into a stationery car on the busy snowfall-hit A19 near Easington. The 15-year-old boy and his four-year-old sister from Tyneside were in the back seat.

In Northern Ireland, one man died and another was injured in a car crash early yesterday as temperatures plunged to a December record low of -13C (9F). The accident

happened when the men's Peugeot 205 left the Ballygawley Road at Dungannon, Co Tyrone. The hurt man suffered head and leg injuries.

Forecasters said yesterday that Scotland was enduring one of its coldest winters in memory. Shetland, the island group 80 kilometers north of Orkney with a population of 22,500, was in the teeth of the storm.

The Islands Council, which declared a state of emergency on Boxing Day, met representatives of the police and coast-

guard yesterday to work out a strategy for coping. The chief executive, Malcolm Green, said there was no need to call on outside assistance.

Shetland islanders, known for their strong community spirit, were visiting elderly and vulnerable neighbours to ensure that they were safe.

Neville Davis, of the Shetland coastguard, said it was working as a secondary emergency service. "We are mainly involved with airlifting people to hospital. We've had about 12 evacuations over the last

couple of days. We took a couple of elderly people suffering from suspected hypothermia to hospital today and we've airlifted people with heart problems and breathing difficulties."

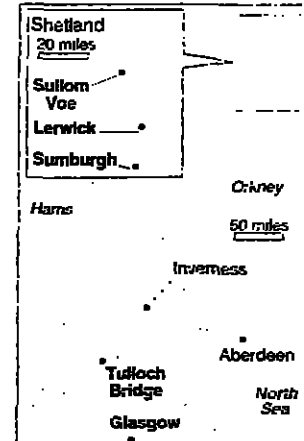
"We also airlifted a mother who was stranded with a three-day-old baby in Sum-

burgh back to Lerwick so that she could get supplies."

Mr Davis said the rescue centre in Lerwick had had electricity supplies through-out, as had the local hospital, but the whole of the island had

been affected by the snow. "I've certainly never seen anything like this on Shetland before. Walking to the helicopter landing pad, the snow was knee deep. There has been a huge effort to get the roads open," he said.

The Lerwick lifeboat was delivering coal, milk and bottled gas on a 140-mile round trip to the most remote communities. The lifeboat *Snoiva* will also take food to three families in Brindister who have run out. The first



Continued on page 2, col 3

Forte in fast food sale

Forte confirmed the sale of the Little Chef, Happy Eater and Welcome Break roadside businesses to Whitbread for £1.05 billion as part of its defence against the £3 billion bid from Granada. The disposal leaves Forte as a pure hotels group.

The deal raised City hopes that Forte would return some of the proceeds to shareholders through a special dividend. The deadline for its defence against Granada, an ideal opportunity to announce a special dividend, is next Tuesday. Pages 21, 25

Public sector pay clash looms

John Major faces confrontation over pay with doctors, nurses and teachers, who are seeking increases of up to 8 per cent. Their review bodies are expected to recommend rises above the inflation rate. Page 2

Christmas presents reach hostages held in Kashmir

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

TWO British hostages held in Kashmir since July have received taped Christmas greetings, woolly socks and winter clothing from loved ones through intermediaries in India. The captives are guarded by 20 separatist gunmen at 10,000 ft in the Himalayan foothills, their lives in the balance.

The British High Commission in Delhi, which has made extraordinary efforts to save the men, is seeking face-to-face talks with representatives of Al Faran, the kidnappers group. Attempts were being made before the holiday to arrange a meeting in Delhi with Hilary Synnott, the Minister at the High Commission, in the hope of persuading the rebels to

release the men in a humanitarian Christmas gesture.

There were direct telephone contacts between Sir Nicholas Fenn, the High Commissioner, and representatives of Al Faran earlier this month in which it was made clear that the British Government would not pay money to the rebels. The strategy of diplomats in recent weeks has been to try to persuade the group to let the men go over Christmas, which would be interpreted around the world as a magnanimous gesture.

British diplomats who have spent months in Srinagar, capital of the Kashmir Valley, made contact with various militant organisations before establishing direct commun-

ications with Al Faran. Militants have confirmed that the presents reached the two Britons, Keith Mangan and Paul Wells. The group is also holding an American, Donald Huchings, and a German, Dirk Hasert.

Indian troops know almost precisely where the captives are held. "They are not moving around very much because of the severe cold," a senior government source said. "It is snowing heavily."

At the request of Britain, America and Germany, the Indian Government has ordered troops not to attempt to rescue the men in a commando operation, since the captives would almost certainly

Father pleads for help in hunt for Celine

By JOANNA BALE

THE father of the missing French student Celine Figard made a public appeal yesterday for help in tracing her.

Speaking through a relative acting as an interpreter, Bernard Figard asked British lorry drivers to come forward with clues to the identity of the man who gave his daughter a lift on Tuesday last week. The last time she was seen, she was talking to the driver of a Mercedes lorry.

Mr Figard, a 44-year-old farmer, said: "Please keep helping us. We need to find Celine. Lorry drivers, if you have any information regarding the Mercedes lorry, please keep helping the police."

He also appealed directly to his daughter, saying: "Celine, if you can hear us, if you can see us, please show yourself."

All your family and friends are waiting for you."

Haulage experts said yesterday that it was likely the lorry, which bore no company name or logo, was one of thousands of rented vehicles and would be difficult to trace. It was described as a white, two-axle 1733 Mercedes Benz tractor unit, about three years old, pulling a light grey trailer with a 38 to 40-ton Thermo King refrigeration unit.

Detective Constable Steve White of Hampshire Police, said: "There are about 1,300 of these particular Mercedes trucks on the road and the only unusual thing about this one was that it was not sign-written, which might suggest it was rented."

Lorry holds key, page 3

Princess goes on Caribbean sunshine holiday

By JOANNA BALE



Princess: island-bound

THE Princess of Wales left snow-bound Britain for the sunny Caribbean yesterday, as her two sons continued to enjoy a traditional royal Christmas with their father at Sandringham.

The Princess, who boarded a plane at Heathrow, was thought to be heading for the island of Nevis, which she visited three years ago with her sons within weeks of the announcement of her official separation from the Prince of Wales.

Her British West Indian Airways flight was destined for Antigua in the Leeward Islands, from where she was expected to

take a 20-minute flight on to Nevis. Princes William and Harry, 13 and 11, are still at Sandringham with their father, although they could join her later as they are not due back at school until January 10.

On her last trip to Nevis in 1993, the Princess stayed at the Montpelier Plantation Inn in the south of the island. A spokeswoman said: "If the Princess was staying here we certainly would not be confirming the fact."

The Princess is reported to have had a cold Christmas lunch, left for her staff who had been given the holiday off, followed by a trip to her psychotherapist

on Boxing Day. She spent more than an hour visiting Susie Orbach, who counselled her over her bulimia several years ago. The Princess was pictured smiling as she left the feminist writer's clinic at her home in northwest London. She was also reported to have visited the clinic on Christmas Eve after seeing Prince William and Prince Harry off to Sandringham.

While Nevis was thought to be the most likely destination for the Princess, Antigua is at the centre of a long chain of islands, many of them providing the seclusion she is no doubt seeking, and some of which she has visited before.



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Major faces battle over public-sector pay demands

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

JOHN MAJOR is facing a damaging confrontation with teachers, doctors and nurses over demands for significant pay rises next year.

Teachers' leaders will today call for rises of at least 4 per cent while the Royal College of Nursing has asked for an extra 8 per cent. The British Medical Association has just submitted a claim of between 5 and 8 per cent.

The five independent pay review bodies, which cover 1.4 million public sector workers, are expected to recommend increases averaging above the 3.1 per cent rate of inflation, but this is not expected to go far enough for most groups involved. The bodies will make their recommendations to the Prime Minister next month and a decision will be taken by the Cabinet within a few weeks.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, will fight any attempts to award high pay rises, arguing that this would push up inflation and jeopardise tax cuts in the next Budget. He has already made clear that the Treasury will not provide any extra money and that all public-sector pay rises will have to be offset by gains in efficiency and productivity.

Today the National Association of Head Teachers says

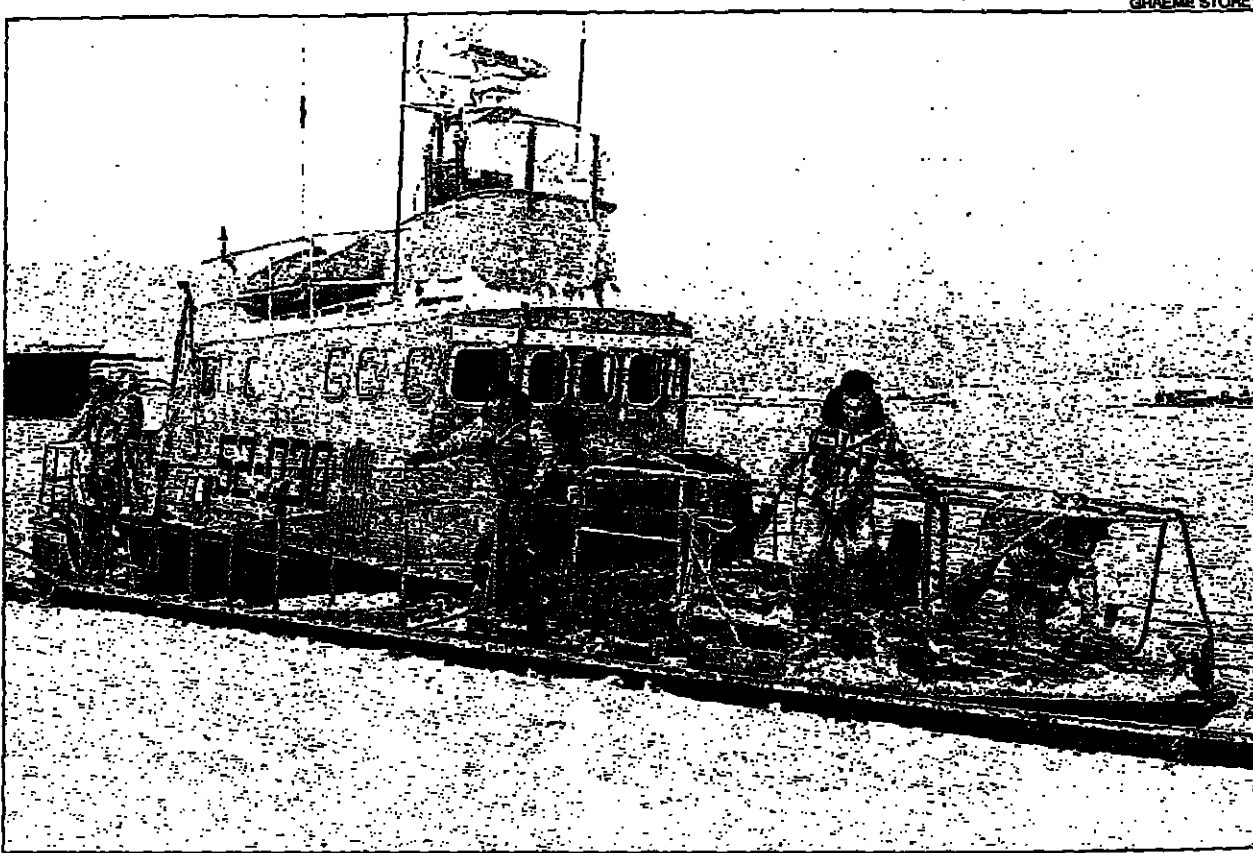
that schools will find it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain good teachers unless they are given a substantial rise. The move is expected to inflame rows over funding shortages just as ministers hoped they had died down.

David Hart, the association's general secretary, says that, as the economy recovers, good graduates will be tempted increasingly into better jobs. In a letter sent to the School Teachers' Review Body today, Mr Hart says that a poor pay rise would increase the risk of another teaching shortage. Experts have already estimated that there could be a shortfall of 30,000 by the end of the decade.

"The Government must accept that there is a looming crisis in teacher recruitment which must be averted at all costs," Mr Hart says. "This can only be averted if the STRB awards teachers a pay settlement for 1996 which enables schools to recruit and retain. That means it must at least be competitive with the rise in average earnings."

Teachers, nurses and doctors have all suffered from Mr Clarke's public-sector pay freeze over the past two years. The Royal College of Nursing, which represents nearly 500,000 nurses, is now demanding a significant award to catch up. It is also arguing against any local pay bargaining next year despite the Government's desire to extend this. Any clash with ministers could test the college's new rule, which allows its members to take strike action.

This year the Government gave nurses a 1 per cent pay rise and allowed NHS trusts to add up to another 2 per cent. After a successful campaign by the college, 97 per cent of trusts eventually agreed to award their nurses the full 3 per cent. "This year demonstrates that local pay bargaining is a force," said a nurses' spokesman. "It took nine months for health trusts to agree to the 3 per cent."



A lifeline in the big freeze: the Aith lifeboat arrives at Lerwick to ferry supplies to the west side of Shetland

Man dies after 45 minutes under ice

By Leyla Linton

A MAN who fell through ice as he tried to rescue his dog from a lake died last night after spending more than 45 minutes under the surface.

Rescuers repeatedly risked their lives in attempts to reach Robert Giles, 25. When they finally pulled him from the water, his body temperature had dropped to 18°C and he was not breathing. However, the body's organs can last longer without oxygen in cold temperatures. He survived for three hours after resuscitation.

Mr Giles's dog, a white Highland terrier, managed to clamber to safety by itself from

Anton's Lake near Andover, Hampshire.

One of the rescuers, Paul Parry, a fireman, plunged into the water three times. He said: "The first time, I had a line tied to me, but the water was so cold I could not break the ice and maintain my footing. I went back after someone had got a surfboard, and I paddled out to where he had fallen, about 30ft from shore."

"I still could not see the bottom of the lake so I came back and got a hook to try to find him. I kept getting stuck in the weeds and mud."

Detective Constable Tony Hewitt, a diving enthusiast, heard about the emergency on

his radio and went home to fetch equipment. Inspector David Waller, of Andover police, said: "He got some ropes and his diving suit and began smashing the ice. He waded into the water, breaking the ice as he went, but could not submerge himself because he did not have the right gear. By this time, a coastguard helicopter had arrived and Tony waded back to the shore."

"He roped up with a coastguard frogman and they waded back into the water. The coastguard, who was also not equipped to dive underneath, thought he saw a person on the bottom. They took it in

turns to duck under, and Tony found the man in about three metres of water. He was on the bottom of the lake. However, they could not pull him up."

The two men went back to the bank and the coastguard took some of DC Hewitt's weights. He swam back out and dived under and finally pulled Mr Giles to the surface. People on the bank pulled them in on their ropes.

Mr Giles was flown to the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester, where Dr Martin Nancekivil said: "The cold would have stopped the heart and other organs. Their oxygen requirement is then drastically reduced."

Millions to get cold weather cash

Continued from page 1
supplies to reach Shetland from the mainland since Christmas Eve are due into Lerwick today on the P&O ferry *St Clair*.

The privatised electricity company Scottish Hydro-Electric expected all but a handful of homes to be reconnected today but admitted that some families would wake up this morning to a fifth day without power.

Shetland, where it was -5°C (23°F) overnight, was one of the mildest places in Scotland yesterday. In Glasgow, the temperature fell to -18.7°C (1°F)

in the early hours, making it the coldest night there on record. Tulloch Bridge in the southwest Highlands was the coldest place in Scotland yesterday at -20°C (-3°F) — several degrees below Moscow or Oslo and on a par with Helsinki and Stockholm. Six months ago, the remote moor near Fort William, which has an automatic weather station, was the hottest place in Britain for several days with temperatures of 30°C (86°F).

Rail services in Scotland were said to be in a state of "near anarchy". Hundreds of trains were cancelled when

wheels stuck to frozen tracks as temperatures fell to -21°C (-4°F). In the worst incident, more than a hundred passengers were trapped in a tunnel under Glasgow city centre for eight hours when the train they were in broke down.

Although all main roads on the British mainland were open by lunchtime yesterday, rail routes in Shetland remained blocked and hundreds of high-level minor roads in the Highlands of Scotland and the moors of northern England stayed impassable.

Only in Nottingham was there a thaw — at the city ice-



Scarborough yesterday: less warm than this welcome

rink. Despite sub-zero temperatures outside, the David Essex ballet "Beauty and the Beast" featuring the Russian All Stars had to be abandoned

Cold kills boy who tried to walk home

By A Staff Reporter

A BOY froze to death while trying to walk home after a car accident.

John Colquhoun, 16, collapsed in sub-zero temperatures only about a mile from the scene of the accident early on Christmas Day.

The teenager had tried to walk the three miles to his home after his friend's car skidded off the road near the village of Mauchline, Strathclyde. His family had to identify John's body on Christmas Day.

The apprentice slater had been at a party and was returning home when the car left the icy road. He and his friend decided to make for their homes, in opposite directions, on foot. Strathclyde Police said that John, of Drongan, was discovered later in a frozen state. He was dead on arrival at Ayr Hospital.

His sister Mandy said: "He was wearing just a thin jacket and it had started snowing hard when he was trying to walk. It was extremely cold that night."

"As far as we know, he tried to find shelter, fell asleep and just died in the snow. It is just terrible. We knew something was wrong when he didn't show up in the morning and then heard on the radio that a body had been found."

"We had to go to the hospital and identify him. It is a terrible thing to happen at any time, but to happen on Christmas Day is just tragic."

Lawyers vote on complaint scheme

Ballot papers have been sent to 12,500 members of the Bar on whether it should introduce a complaints system. A ballot of the whole membership was decided before Christmas by a meeting which rejected a modified scheme proposed by Bar leaders.

Peter Goldsmith, QC, the outgoing Bar chairman, says in a letter with ballot papers that the scheme is now modest and contains "strong safeguards to protect barristers against frivolous and unfounded complaints". Rejecting it would send "all the wrong messages about the attitude of the Bar to our clients" and would expose the Bar to the imposition of a "far more draconian" and externally operated scheme.

Watchdog in dock, page 6

NHS drugs 'privatised'

The Government was accused yesterday of stealthily privatising NHS medicines. A health management expert said that continuously putting prescription charges, blacklisting certain drugs and removing others from the prescription register added up to privatisation.

Alan Earl-Slater, a Research Fellow at the Health Services Management Centre, Birmingham University, claimed in a public finance journal that the Government was following the policy "without either admitting it or having the mandate to do it".

Beef sales 'down 25%'

Almost 1½ million households which bought beef in the run-up to Christmas last year decided not to this year, according to research by the marketing firm Nielsen. There was a steady decline in beef buying from the beginning of last month and by the week ending December 16 sales were down more than 25 per cent, compared to the same time in 1994.

Sales of beefburgers in the first two weeks of December were down 25 per cent, then continued to fall to more than 40 per cent in the week ending December 16, compared to last year.

Banks urges peer's sacking

The Labour MP Tony Banks called on Tony Blair to sack Baroness Mallett, the party's home and legal affairs spokeswoman, because of her support for hunting. Mr Banks demanded her removal after she said that Labour peers could scupper any Bill to ban fox-hunting.

Lady Mallett, who rides with the Bicester Hunt, said that entrenched opposition by peers would effectively prevent such a Bill becoming law. Mr Banks said the abolition of hunting was agreed Labour Party policy and it was "unacceptable" that Lady Mallett should defy it.

Major aide turns to gas

An adviser to John Major is to leave Downing Street in the new year to work for British Gas. Rodney Lyne, 43, a former diplomat, will be seconded to the company's overseas business team.

Mr Lyne helped to negotiate the IRA's ceasefire 16 months ago. British Gas said: "He will remain a Foreign Office employee and will be returning to the diplomatic service when his secondment finishes." Whitehall sources said there was nothing significant about Mr Lyne's departure: a normal stint for a private secretary was two to four years.

Christmas cheer but no freedom for hostages

Continued from page 1

ly be killed. Tim Devlin, Labour MP for Stockton South, said yesterday that gifts had been sent to the hostages. He added that Al Faran had asked officials at the British High Commission to arrange payment of compensation for expenses incurred by holding the men.

"With the mention of the word compensation I think they are looking for some reasonable way out. I think they are looking for some sort of face-saving mechanism to withdraw from the situation," Mr Devlin said.

He said India was not going to release prisoners and Britain would not give any money to the kidnappers. "They have made their point. We understand the desire of the militants in Kashmir. They have had some world attention. If I were them I would leave it at that," Mr Mangan, an electrician, lives in Mr Devlin's constituency. It is not the first time compensation has been mentioned: earlier in the crisis Al Faran broke off contacts with Indian intermediaries after local newspapers published reports saying the rebels were seeking ransom.

Al Faran said the stories were planted by the Indian Government to make the group look like "common criminals". The last direct contact with Indian officials via radio was on November 26, when the kidnappers demanded the release of three top militants, whom they named.

Al Faran has been told that India will not release prisoners in exchange for the hostages. The captives' partners, in appealing for the men's release, have emphasised in public statements that there is no possibility of the demand being met. Al Faran has claimed in statements at various times during the crisis

that one or more of the men was ill or injured, and it is known that the group has sought medicines from local pharmacies. There is no firm evidence, however, that any of the men is seriously unwell.

All the hostages were trekking with their partners when they were seized. The women were released immediately. They waited for the crisis for months in Srinagar and at the British High Commission compound in Delhi before returning home.

Al Faran appears to have been created specifically for the seizure of foreign hostages in an attempt to get key militants out of Indian jails. It is believed to be linked with Harkat-ul-Ansar, a militant organisation based in Pakistan. One theory is that it is a renegade group operating independently of Harkat's leadership. Islamic groups around the world have appealed for Al Faran to let the men go because it is sullying the reputation of the separatist cause in Kashmir.

Even among Islamic fundamentalist groups in Pakistan there is a sense that the group realises its demands will not be met and that it is looking for a face-saving way out. Abdul Hamid Turkey, self-styled commander-in-chief of Al Faran, was killed in an exchange of fire with Indian forces on December 4 in a village near Anantnag in the Kashmir Valley, close to where the hostages are being held in the Pahalgam area.



Mangan and Wells, third and fourth from left, with three other hostages when they were seized

CPS apologises to court for day off

THE Crown Prosecution Service began an inquiry yesterday into why it had not sent anyone to a Boxing Day magistrates' court sitting, leaving 31 defendants to walk free (Joanna Bale writes).

Gordon Etherington, the Chief Crown Prosecutor, began the investigation after sending a senior official to apologise to the court. Andrew Hadjil, branch prosecutor for Camberwell, south London, went to Old Street Magistrates' Court and issued a statement, saying: "Once [the Chief Crown Prosecutor] has all the facts, he will be making reports and taking what action is necessary." The hearing was one of a

handful held around the country on Boxing Day to deal with people arrested over Christmas.

The 31 defendants, facing charges ranging from supplying drugs to burglary, were freed when Michael Johnstone, a stipendiary magistrate, discharged them because nobody from the CPS turned up to prosecute them. A spokesman for the service said that 13 defendants would be rearrested; a decision had yet to be made on the others.

Liz Justice, a CPS spokeswoman, said: "The court was not on our rota system so we did not send anyone. The irony is that we did have a spare

advocate on stand-by, but no one managed to contact us."

"We are taking this very seriously because we don't want people walking the streets when they should have been locked up. We are still trying to trace one member of staff to see whether she was notified, but we will not be able to build up a complete picture until people return from the Christmas break."

She added last night: "We have no record of being officially notified at our head office that there was a court sitting at Old Street on Boxing Day. The clerk had put a notice up in the CPS room at the court, but that was overlooked."

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Haulage experts believe unmarked vehicle was rented and will prove difficult to trace

Lorry holds key to French student's disappearance

By JOANNA BALE

THE lorry in which the missing French student Celine Figard was last seen is likely to prove difficult to trace, haulage experts said yesterday. As police issued posters showing the Mercedes Benz lorry, it emerged that it was probably one of thousands owned or rented by small freelance operators.

The lorry had no company name or logo on it. Ian Norwell, of Mercedes Benz, said: "If the truck and trailer were part of a big company, they would have had a name on the side. This was almost certainly a rented trailer because it was plain. He was also driving a plain white Mercedes tractor unit truck, which is the most common colour ordered by big companies because they are easier to sell second-hand to smaller companies and owner-drivers. "He hasn't been traced yet, which suggests he might be an owner-driver, but they do tend to personalise their own trucks, whereas this one was plain, so was most likely rented."

Mercedes Benz sells about 2,000 tractor units every year at an average cost of £70,000 each, and many are sold on to second or third owners. The 1733 model is between three and six years old.

John Gumeridge, of the Freight Transport Association, also said yesterday that the driver was probably renting and would therefore be difficult to trace. "If he worked for a large company, he would have been traced by now. Given the time of year, with the pressure for pre-Christmas deliveries, he might have been making a trip he would not normally make."

"The best bet in tracing will

come from other truck drivers who tend to know each other. The description of the lorry is quite specific, but a lot of people who hold truck driving licences appear and disappear from the scene. They don't necessarily drive full-time, so this man may have gone to ground, even abroad."

David Lowe, sales director of Thermo King Northern, said that Thermo King trailers were very common. "About half of all refrigerated trailers on the road are Thermo King. There are thousands of them."



The Mercedes 1733: one of 1,300 on the road

This one probably belongs to a rental company because it did not have a name on the side, but all sorts of people rent trailers, especially at Christmas, including large companies."

One employee at TIP, a trailer rental firm, said: "A new Thermo-King trailer costs about £40,000, but you can rent one for £300 a week. They are very common, and you get all sorts of people renting them, from blue-chip companies to one man set-ups."

Detective Chief Superintendent Des Thomas, who is leading the hunt for Mlle Figard, said the lorry driver held the key to the investiga-

tion: "If he's a bona fide chap there's no reason why he should not come forward and help us." He said the incident room had been inundated with calls offering leads, but added: "I have no doubt at all we will find this lorry driver. My great concern is we will not find him in time to recover Celine."

He said police were treating the search as a murder inquiry. "I had the unfortunate duty of telling her father I am somewhat pessimistic about the outcome of this. We all hope and pray we will find Celine alive. It will be the best thing that could happen, but experience has shown that is not necessarily the case after this amount of time."

Mlle Figard was last known to have accepted a lift from a lorry driver at the Granada service station on the A34 at Chieveley, near Newbury, Berkshire. It is thought the lorry driver from whom she accepted the lift had told her that he would take her as far as Salisbury, Wiltshire.

She had intended to catch a bus from Salisbury to Fordingbridge, Hampshire, to spend Christmas with her cousin, Jean-Marc Figard, 24. Because of problems ringing him from the service area, she was going to use the mobile telephone in the driver's cab, but her cousin received no call.

The owner of the Ashburn Hotel in Fordingbridge, where Miss Figard's cousin worked, described her yesterday as a "charming girl". Gary Robson said: "Celine is a polite, well-brought up and good-mannered girl. Everyone at the hotel is terribly shocked and upset that she has gone missing. We are hoping for the best."



Bernard Figard praised the police, top, shown searching a field beside the A303, south of where Celine Figard was last seen, for their efforts in trying to trace his daughter, who had been hitch-hiking to visit her cousin



Missing A-level pupil 'victim of bullying'

By BILL FROST

A MISSING sixth-former whose belongings were found beside a cliff had been the victim of bullying at school, his father said last night.

Unknown to his parents, 18-year-old Andrew Smith had stayed away from school for three weeks before his disappearance. He was last seen on December 11. Two days ago, his bicycle and backpack were discovered, hidden near the Old Harry Rocks at Swanage, Dorset.

The teenager, who has 11 GCSEs, was studying for four A levels and an AS level at Poole Grammar School. He hoped to become an airline pilot. As police renewed their search for him yesterday, Ken Smith, 55, his father, said: "Until we get him back, we won't know for certain, but we are 99 per cent sure he has gone because of pranks and verbal abuse at school. From what we have learnt since Andrew went missing, it has been going on for about six months."

"Apparently a group of about five or six so-called mates were involved. They would do things like go to a party together and thought it was then a great idea to order a taxi but leave Andrew to make his own way home from about five miles away."

"He never spoke to us about it. Andrew is a very sensitive boy and this upset him. It never took much for him to burst into tears so he took the bullying very much to heart."

"He had been skipping school for about three weeks before he went missing, but we had no idea until we got a letter from the school telling us about it. He used to leave home as if everything was normal, but never actually arrived at school, and then come home in the evenings as if he had been there all day. On the day he left he seemed perfectly normal and didn't say anything to give us concern. The school have denied bullying goes on inside their gates but I know differently."

Sally Smith, 45, the teenager's mother, said: "We have spent the whole of Christmas just holding each other and crying." Like her husband, she hopes that their son is living rough, possibly in a beach hut or staying with a friend.

The parents are to appeal for their son on breakfast television today.

Extensive police searches using divers and tracker dogs have failed to produce any indication of his whereabouts. Yesterday a fresh search was started and a coastguard helicopter was brought in. A police spokesman said: "We are very worried about Andrew. He has never done anything like this before and there is great concern for his safety."

No spokesman for Poole Grammar School was available to comment on the teenager's disappearance last night.



Andrew Smith: hoped to become airline pilot

Shoppers extend Christmas break in rush to sales

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE lure of the sales kept much of the nation away from work yesterday as bargain-hunters went on a shopping spree instead.

With more winter sales opening on the same day than ever before, crowds headed for out-of-town shopping malls or city centre stores rather than to work.

Even with fewer commuter trains than normal, most of the carriages were half empty in what should have been the rush hour. "We expected 60 per cent of normal weekday traffic," a spokesman for the London-Tilbury-Southeast line said, "but we have probably got less than half. The trains only got busier off-peak, as people went shopping."

London Underground ran a

modified Saturday service, and found that the busiest stations were those closest to the shops.

Mike Lampert, of the West Anglia Great Northern Railway, said: "The City is supposed to be working so we are running a full service, but we have had nothing like a full turnout. Only about 60 per cent of the normal number have travelled, and quite a lot were going shopping."

In the City of London, many of the banks and stock-brokers reported a quiet day, with employees extending their Christmas break into the new year. The FT-SE 100 index managed an 18.1 point rise in a day which saw one of the lowest trading volumes of the year, with fewer than 300 million shares traded. Many of the traders who did come into the office promptly went

out for a long lunch, making a better-than-expected day for City watering holes.

AA Roadwatch said there had been no rush-hour traffic jams, adding: "The only congestion has been concentrated around shopping centres, which have been very, very busy."

In Newcastle upon Tyne, the brothers John and David Fowler had camped outside Barker and Stonehouse since Christmas Day to secure a two-sofa set in peach leather reduced from £2,265 to £95.

But sub-zero temperatures and some overnight snow limited early morning queues outside the West End stores in London. People started arriving at Selfridges in Oxford Street only 30 minutes before opening time, but when the doors opened at 9am, the managing director, Tim Dan-

iels, claimed there were 600 waiting outside. The biggest rush was to the men's designerwear department, which remained one of the busiest areas of the shop throughout the day.

By noon, the store had taken £1 million, 19 per cent up on last year's midday figure. Mr Daniels said it appeared that the number of shoppers on Oxford Street was up by a fifth on last year.

"People are going for better quality merchandise," a store spokeswoman added, "spending more money and being more discriminating."

In general, shop-floors only filled with bargain hunters at about 10.30am, by which time security men were stationed at some escalators to ensure they did not become so crowded as to be unsafe.

As pressure on changing

rooms built up, suited gents threw modesty to the winds and dropped their trousers behind racks of overcoats so that they could seek their wives' approval for new outfits. In the ladies' departments, women bearing armloads of hangers mercilessly pushed open doors and curtains concealing rival shoppers in states of semi-nudity.

"It has been very hectic," said a spokeswoman at Fenwick in Bond Street, "but we do like our customers to retain a sense of decorum."

In Bristol city centre, car parks were full before the shops opened. Peter Tregellas, manager of the local Debenhams, said trade was 15 per cent up on last year.

At the MetroCentre on Tyneside, the biggest shopping complex in Europe, queues began forming more than two hours before opening time. The malls were opened early to let people in from the cold, and 7,000 flocked through the doors in the first half-hour. The car parks were full before 11am, but shoppers continued to arrive at the same pace throughout the day. "We have certainly matched last year, and possibly exceeded it," the centre's spokesman said.

Jackie Moores, manager of Manchester's 150-store Arndale Centre, said shoppers had braved temperatures of -4C. "There are a lot of people about for fashions, footwear, and sportswear," she said. "Only we retailers seem to be working."

BARGAIN-HUNTER'S CHECKLIST

LONDON

Burberry: ladies classic raincoat reduced from £395 to £235, men's trenchcoat from £525 to £295.

Fenwick: Nicole Farhi satin jackets reduced from £199 to £99; John Smedley crew neck sweaters from £65 to £31.95; Fenn, Wright and Manson silk shirts from £115 to £55.

Gieves & Hawkes: business suits reduced from £495 to £245, cashmere sweaters from £450 to £195 and tweed jackets £350 to £150.

Heal's: handmade Avon bed reduced from £2,495 to £1,870, Trent oak sideboard from £1,295 to £885, curtain and upholstery fabrics from £3 a metre.

Liberty: Issy Miyake and Yohji Yamamoto fashions up to two-thirds off, Persian Bidjar Kelim rug reduced from £450 to £225.

Selfridges: Blancpain men's watch reduced from £79,000 to £50,378, 1.5 litres of Shalimar eau de toilette, reduced from £2,500 to £1,250; Maxmara women's suit reduced from £305 to £152; Betty Jackson jackets from £315 to £157; Hugo Boss, Nicole Farhi and YSL fashions up to 50 per cent off; large sofa in selected hide reduced from £2,049 to £1,019; Persian hand-made rugs from £799 to £399.

Simpson: men's Daks suits

down from £299 to £149, jackets from £219 to £109 and trousers from £79 to £39. Ladies' Daks jackets from £229 to £159, Berri Barclay trouser suit from £238 to £148, Louise Kennedy suits from £484 to £328.

NATIONWIDE

Austin Reed: men's wool suits down from £279 to £199, women's winter coats from £279 to £139.

Bally: 40 per cent off autumn and winter shoes.

Currys: Sony 29in Surround Sound television with Fastext plus 4-head Nicam stereo video with VideoPlus at £1,299, saving £200.

Dixons: Sony TR680 Hi8 hi-fi stereo camcorder reduced from £999.99 to £699.99; Canon Epoca 35mm zoom camera from £349.99 to £199.99; Grundig GT2105 21in Nicam television was £399.99, now £299.99.

Habitat: solid beech table reduced from £399 to £279, sofa and armchair reduced from £1,448 to £1,158.

House of Fraser: Argenteum sterling silver cutlery 60-piece canteen reduced from £3,999 to £1,999; Sony TV/video was £699, now £499; a Relyon Royal packet-sprung mattress was £1095, now £595.

Kendals, Manchester: Ralph Lauren wool dress was £580, now £290.

'Wrap up the whole store — I'll take it'

By ROBIN YOUNG

ONE delighted shopkeeper claimed yesterday that an Arab sheikh had purchased almost the entire contents of his London store for £350,000 to give his third wife.

Martin Barnett, owner of a West End soft furnishings and embroidery shop, said that the sheikh, who did not want to be named, had been vouched for by Hamad bin Ali al-Thani, a member of the Qatari royal family, with whom Mr Barnett says he runs a shop in

Doha. Mr Barnett said the sheikh's intention was to recreate the Edgware Road store to please his wife.

He said the sheikh's shopping list included two computerised embroidery machines at £40,000 each, 150 hand-made sofas at £500 each and 150 matching chairs at £300. He added: "The sheikh saved himself at least £200,000 by buying in the sale. We still have enough stock to continue in business."



Martin Barnett outside his shop: a £350,000 sale

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Message to middle-aged: forget the jog, just skip the pudding

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

MIDDLE-AGED men feeling the effects of the festive season weighing heavily upon them would be better advised to diet than to take up jogging.

An American study has shown that both courses of action are helpful, but that weight loss has substantially more benefits than exercise alone. A team from the University of Maryland studied 111 overweight men between the ages of 46 and 80. They were split

into three groups: 44 were told to lose 10 per cent of their body weight, 49 were told to exercise without losing weight, while the other 18 went on as before and served as controls. The trial lasted nine months.

Dr Leslie Katzel and his colleagues report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that the weight-loss and the exercise group had both benefited. Their levels of low density lipoprotein cholesterol — the so-called "bad" cholesterol that increases the risks of heart attacks — were

down. So were levels of plasma triglycerides — fats found in the blood — and insulin. Both are indicators of coronary disease.

But the weight-loss group did significantly better. Not only were their decreases in glucose and insulin levels greater and their blood pressure lower, but they also showed gains in high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, the beneficial variety that cuts the risk of heart disease.

The older men found it harder to lose the weight, and did not gain as great a benefit. But the

message is clear. All other things being equal, overweight and sedentary men should first think about losing weight. Dr Katzel concludes: "Collectively, these results suggest that weight loss is the preferred treatment to improve coronary artery disease risk factor profiles in healthy, overweight, sedentary, middle-aged and older men."

Another study published in the journal shows that lowering blood pressure in middle-age can have even greater benefits, enabling men to retain mental

vigour into old age. The reason is that high blood pressure may cause many tiny "silent" strokes that have no obvious symptoms but can permanently impair memory and thinking ability, the scientists responsible believe.

Dr Lenore Launer, of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in The Netherlands, carried out a study with colleagues from the University of Hawaii and the US National Institute on Ageing. They returned to a group of Japanese-American men original-

ly enrolled in a heart study in the 1960s, when they were middle-aged. They now have an average age of 78.

The team examined their ability to remember, to think abstractly, to make judgments and to concentrate. They found that those with a high systolic blood pressure — the first of the two figures in a blood pressure reading — in middle age were almost two and a half times more likely to have poor cognitive function in old age than those with a low systolic pressure.

For every 10-point increase in

systolic blood pressure, there was a 9 per cent increase in the risk of poor cognitive function later in life. High systolic pressure was defined as more than 160, low as less than 110. A normal systolic reading is about 120.

A gap between the sexes is narrowing on those classed as heavy smokers. Figures from the Advertising Association show 9 per cent of women admit to smoking more than 20 a day compared with 12 per cent of men. In 1982, the figures were 11 per cent for women and 18 for men.

Minister to issue pledge on release of the mentally ill

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A CHARTER for the mentally ill is to be announced by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, in an attempt to allay public concern over violent attacks by patients released into the community.

The charter, to be issued for consultation in the new year, will include the guarantee that patients will not be discharged from hospital if it is thought that there could be the slightest risk to carers, relatives or the public. Patients who are sent home will be able to get home visits from nurses or social workers within four hours in urgent cases.

Yesterday a charity for the homeless blamed a shortage of hospital beds for increasing numbers of mentally ill people being forced on to the streets this Christmas. The charity, Crisis, is providing 480 beds for the homeless in London this week, the biggest programme it has run. Its director, Martin Southern, said the charity was helping more mentally ill people because "the people who ten years ago would have expected to go into hospital don't get that far and fall out of the system. There is a shortage of beds."

Mr Dorrell is anxious to quell public fears that the policy of care in the community is leading to attacks by the mentally ill. Highly publicised cases such as the murder of Jonathan Zito by Christopher Clunis at a Lon-

don Tube station in 1992 have caused widespread concern.

There have been other tragedies since, and in August, Gerald Malone, the Health Minister, told NHS chairman to improve care-in-the-community standards and report back to the Secretary of State. He is due to announce the outcome shortly.

The danger is that the policy will be seen simply as one of closing old asylums with nothing effective put in their place.

Yesterday Mr Dorrell said: "When there's comment about the mental health services, people often latch on to the phrase 'care in the community' and say this means the Government is not interested in hospital care, which isn't true. The phrase has become misleading because it has come to imply that the only



Dorrell responding to public concerns

type of mental health service we are interested in delivering is one based on community health and that is not the case.

"What we are concerned to do is deliver a spectrum of care, so that someone who is acutely mentally ill has their acute needs met in a hospital. And that there is care available in a sheltered setting for those who need it, that there is community care for those who need it and crisis teams for meeting crisis need."

"The standard I am looking for as a result of this Malone letter is not caring for everybody in the community, in the one-dimensional sense. It is a spectrum of care meeting health need. What the charter will do is set out what the patient is entitled to expect under the existing law."

Kate Harrison, of the mental health charity Mind, said that the fear of mental patients was disproportionate. "There are 12 murders a year by mentally ill people, out of a total of 700. While any incident of this sort is tragic, the impression the public has is exaggerated."

She doubted the charter would have much effect. "The truth is that there is a dearth of services for the mentally ill, plus a lack of social support and things to do. The Government should provide more money for community care and set national minimum standards, not issue another consultative document."

Village shop is crushed by kilos

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE owners of an award-winning village shop blame the cost of going metric for having to close. Steven and Sonia Dorward had run the store at Hawksworth, Nottinghamshire, for 26 years.

They had been able to make ends meet only by Mr Dorward, 57, working part-time at a tractor factory. Converting from pounds and ounces to kilograms last October cost them £3,000.

Mrs Dorward said: "We had a nice old weighing machine which we'd just had serviced, but we still had to change. It seemed to me very, very complicated for a little village shop. We tried weighing things beforehand and packaging them, but the customers didn't seem to like it."

Mr Dorward also blamed other factors: "We couldn't compete with supermarkets, and now our wholesale market has been moved and the supermarkets get first choice from the growers." Christine Cameron-Williams, a shopper at Dorward's, which won the Calor Gas award for Best Midlands Village Shop last year, said: "I'm very sad it's closed. It was a super shop and very much part of the village. Now you meet people who have always shopped at Dorward's wandering around Nottingham, looking rather lost."

Mr Dorward has become assistant manager at the tractor factory and his wife runs a sub-post office at the former shop.



Steven and Sonia Dorward: shutting their award-winning store after 26 years

Girl faces legal fight over her gift horse

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE owner of a riding centre is to take legal action in an attempt to force a 12-year-old girl to hand over the pony she was given for Christmas.

Becky Murray, 12, spent more than a year nuzzling out at a nearby farm to convince her mother that she was serious about wanting a pony. Teresa Murray bought her a six-year-old bay gelding for £600 at an auction in September, which Becky named Mistral.

However, Harold Restall, 58, the owner of a riding centre near Becky's home at Audenshaw, Greater Manchester, says Mistral is a Cob pony named Mikey stolen from him on the day of the auction. Mrs Murray has refused to return the pony, so Mr Restall is taking the case to Tameside County Court in February.

Yesterday Mrs Murray said: "I bought Mistral in good faith and Becky was delighted to get her. Now this thing has knocked the sparkle right out of her Christmas."

Mikey, which was used to pull traps and wedding carriages, was stolen from a field next to Mr Restall's riding centre in Radcliffe, near Bury. Mrs Murray bought Mistral at an auction in Chelmsford, Cheshire, on the day of the theft from a young girl who was with two adults and three smaller children.

Mr Restall, whose legal bill could be £2,000, said: "It's not the money that concerns me, it is the principle that my property should be returned."

All change on line that took the strine

RESIDENTS and visitors arriving at Covent Garden in London will no longer find themselves being welcomed by a woman with an Australian accent (Jonathan Prynn writes).

The recorded announcement in the lift at the Tube station has puzzled many travellers as they emerge near the spot where Professor Higgins despaired of Eliza Doolittle's cockney accent in *Pygmalion*.

In pure "strine" tones, an Australian woman's voice begins: "Welcome to Covent Garden station. Please take care of your valuables. She then gives directions to the major attractions. Dick Ensor, vice-chairman of the Covent Garden Community Association, said the voice, used since the spring, had been questioned at a meeting with London Underground.

A Tube spokeswoman said the message

was being changed to include more information, not because of the accent. She added: "A contractor doing lift work had an Australian woman in their employ and we were happy for her to be the voice. We do not agree that all announcements should be in middle-class, standard English accents."

"We do have a certain amount of ethnic representation in our workforce."

**I'M A LOYAL
MONARCHIST
SAYS
AUSTRALIAN PM**

Until then, there's Glenfiddich to enjoy.



Astronaut's heels may hold clue to osteoporosis

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

SCIENTISTS are waiting for a German astronaut to return from space with clues to the problem of osteoporosis.

For the past three months Thomas Reiter, has had his heel tapped by a device designed to simulate walking. In each ten-minute session it is tapped 500 times on a spring-loaded exercise machine designed by researchers at Bath University.

The machine is the brainchild of Allen Goodship and Paul Dieppe, professors at Bristol University, who believe the regular impact of the heel on a pavement is the missing ingredient in space exercise regimes. Astronauts can tone muscles by daily exercise on a bicycle or rowing machine but there has been no equivalent for the bones.

In space, they tend to lose mass in a process similar to osteoporosis. Astronauts can lose 10 per cent of bone mass during a lengthy mission, as bone responds to the forces on it. When these are low, in the weightlessness of space, it tends to wither away.

Professor Goodship measured the astronaut's bone density at Star City, near Moscow, before lift-off. During the mission his bones are also being routinely measured by ultra-sound scanners. When he returns to earth in a few weeks, Professor Goodship hopes to examine the astronaut's bones again.

Only one leg has been subjected to the heel-tap routine, and its bone mass will be compared with the other leg.

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Salford plans to transform its industrial past into monument to a working-class hero

Lowry's forgotten works to emerge in £75m tribute

By Bill Frost

ALMOST two decades after the death of L.S. Lowry, the world's largest collection of his paintings and sketches is at last to be given pride of place by the city he immortalised in his work.

Salford's most famous son will be celebrated in a £75 million arts centre bearing his name. The centrepiece of the project will be a purpose-built gallery for more than 300 of his depictions of working-class life in the North West.

Salford Art Gallery, which owns the collection, has had to keep dozens of sketches and paintings in a cramped basement. Financial constraints and shortage of space prevented the display of any more than half the paintings. In addition, no catalogue of his work exists and an archive of tape-recordings, photographs and letters documenting the artist's life languishes in a cupboard.

This "parlous state of affairs", as Lowry's friends and life-long collectors describe it, will be rectified by the project to transform Salford Quays, an area that once bustled with the industrial scenes that were the artist's inspiration.

As the development plans took shape last year, Mike Leber, senior curator at Salford Art Gallery, which bought its first Lowry in 1936, said the new centre "could not be built soon enough". He added: "Salford has been in an embarrassing situation for years in that it owns a collection of national importance, but has had other spending priorities."

Mr Leber said the Victorian art gallery was not appropri-



Lowry: his paintings are kept in a basement

ate to house a national collection in perpetuity. "It is difficult to control heating and lighting. Several pictures have been on display for 40 years and we cannot show as many as we would like. Access to our Lowry archive is virtually zero because we have no space and too few staff."

A substantial injection of National Lottery cash is expected to be announced within weeks to allow building work to start at Salford Quays. The centre, and other developments taking the total investment to £180 million, is said to be Britain's first purpose-built development to combine performing and visual arts. In addition to the gallery for 350 Lowry works and another for touring exhibitions, it includes a fixed-seat theatre for 1,650 and a 400-seat flexible theatre, a "hands-on" children's gallery and a national virtual reality centre to provide training for industry.

The Millennium Commission has already approved the

Lowry Centre scheme, and planners are now expecting the endorsement of the Arts Council and National Heritage Memorial Fund.

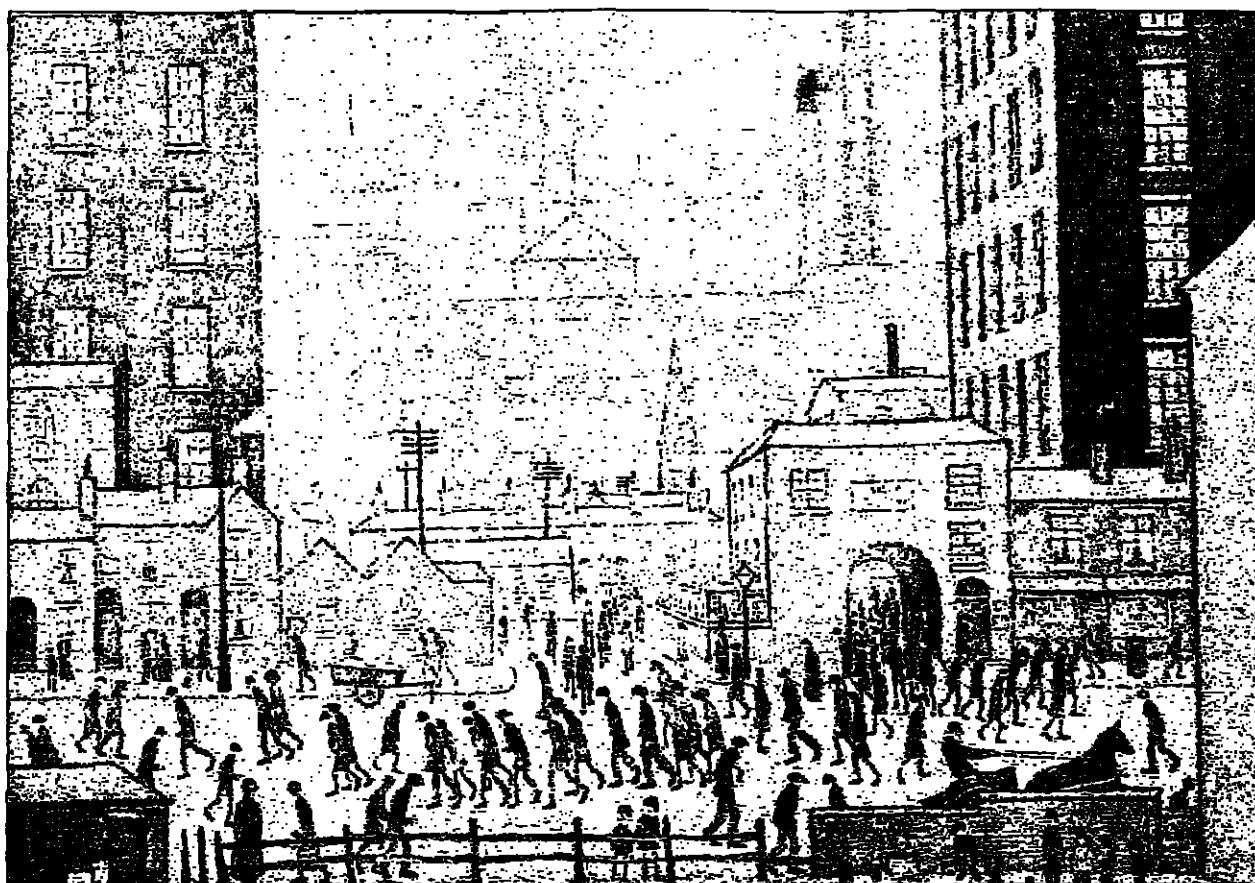
Bill Hinds, leader of Salford City Council, which has led the project, said: "The waterfront at Salford is a step away from the transformation which cities such as Baltimore, Boston and Toronto have realised. I believe the arts should be accessible to all and that the centre will transform the culture and the economy of the North West."

The centre's backers are hoping for £45 million from the National Lottery. It is hoped the complex will generate £10 million from an expected 700,000 visitors each year, and provide an extra £4 million a year in local income.

Supporters of the project include the Oscar-winning actor Ben Kingsley, who began his career in Salford. "There is a great deal of talent in the North West of England and the Lowry Centre will be the focus for their aspirations," he said. "As a former Salford Player, I can imagine the excitement and enthusiasm that this project will bring."

Albert Finney, another of the city's famous sons, said: "This imaginative project has my wholehearted support. Not just the city of Salford and the great North West, but the arts in Britain generally will benefit from this terrific concept."

The actor Robert Powell, another supporter of the project, said: "The Lowry Centre is a remarkable idea in a remarkable setting. Salford never fails to amaze: first the canal, then the quays, now this superb project which will inspire generations to come."



Coming from the Mill (detail). Chronicler of Lancashire working life, Lowry kept his own employment a secret

Vision woven from a spinning mill

FOR much of his life Laurence Stephen Lowry feared that he would be regarded as an amateur if his public discovered that he worked as chief clerk to a rent collection company (Bill Frost writes). He sought recognition as a serious artist and not until his death in 1976 were his admirers told of his nine-to-five job in Manchester.

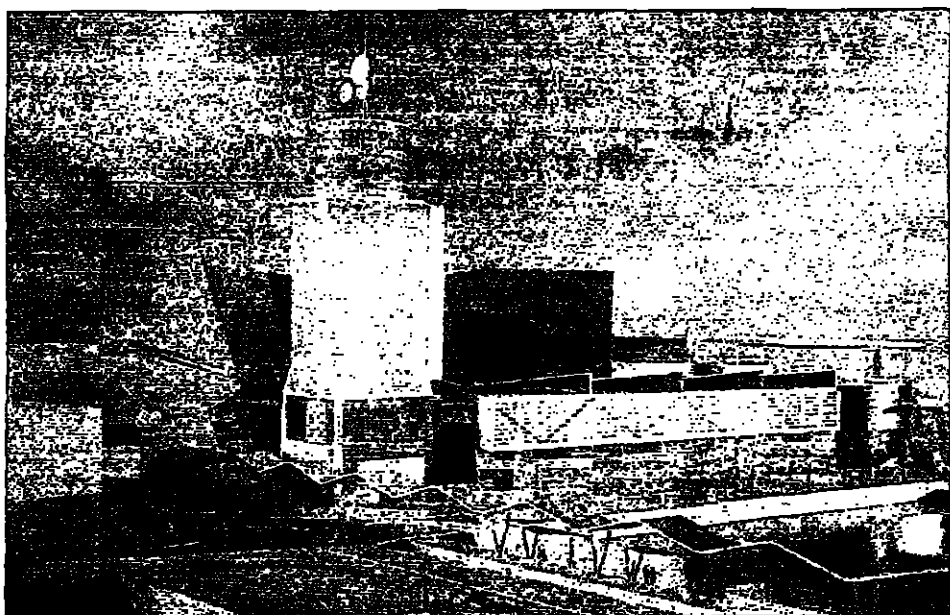
While taking evening classes at the Salford School of Art in 1915, he "discovered" the industrial backdrop which was to provide him with his

sometimes bleak but always poetic inspiration. Sir John Rothenstein, author of *Modern English Painters*, wrote: "One day he missed a train at Pendlebury and, as he left the station, he saw the Acme Spinning Mill... he experienced an earthly equivalent of some transcendental revelation."

Lowry cultivated the role of eccentric, wearing the same mackintosh and cap in the 1970s that he wore for his celebrated self-portrait in 1925. In the small front room of his Salford home

were clocks showing different times. "I don't want to know the real time," he explained. His taste in art was catholic. The Impressionists exerted a strong lure and he amassed a collection of Pre-Raphaelite drawings by Rossetti.

According to some critics, the greatest hindrance he faced was public fondness for his work. Shelley Ronde, author of *A Private View: L.S. Lowry*, said: "He is far too popular for the art establishment. They should have put up a purpose-built gallery when he died."



The proposed Lowry Centre hopes to attract £45 million in lottery funding

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SALFORD
IN THE TIMES



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For an extra £15, you can take the high-speed Stena Lynx catamaran from Dover, crossing to Calais in just 45 minutes (from February 13, 1996) or the Stena Lynx from Newhaven to Dieppe crossing in just two hours and 15 minutes (starting February 29, 1996).

Readers are also offered Ski-Link, a special package for ski-drivers for a car and two people, starting at £125 for up to ten days and £135 for up to 17 days. Additional passengers are £27 and £32 (children £15 and £16) respectively. It saves you 10% on normal prices and includes AA Five Star Roadside Assistance Cover and Home and Overseas Personal Insurance with winter sports cover.

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THE TIMES
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Cabin or rest area accommodation is compulsory on Southampton-Cherbourg overnight crossings; 24-hour inside cabin £25, including seat £5

Vermeer exhibition beats US shutdown

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON'S museums and federal offices remained silent yesterday as the partial government shutdown stretched into a record twelfth day. But there was one exception: using private funds, the Smithsonian Institution reopened the National Gallery of Art's unprecedented Johannes Vermeer exhibition.

The exhibition is the first devoted to the 17th-century Dutch master and boasts 21 of his 35 known paintings, whose owners include the Queen. "Given the uncertainty of when it [the shutdown] will end, we decided to do what we could to make this once-in-a-lifetime event accessible to people from all over the world," Earl Powell, the gallery's director, said.

Tens of thousands of people have bought advance tickets and have planned special visits to Washington. The exhibition opened to huge acclaim on November 12 but was almost immediately closed by the first six-day government shutdown. It briefly reopened, but was closed again when the present shutdown began on December 16. It must close for good on February 11 ready for shipment to The Hague.

The gallery has taken \$30,000 (£20,000) from its Fund for International Exchange to pay for 25 guards for a week. It hopes the shutdown will end by then, an optimism that could prove unfounded. Talks to resolve America's budget crisis resumed yesterday but with little chance of a quick breakthrough.

Schools threatened by violence turn to police for advice

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

SECONDARY schools should seek police advice on potential flashpoints in their local community and assess security arrangements to protect staff and students, head teachers will be told next month.

The Secondary Heads Association has hired a former assistant chief constable to supply schools with security advice after a series of violent incidents, including the murder of Philip Lawrence outside a northwest London school.

Ken Cooper, a security consultant and retired member of the Northamptonshire force,

will advise all schools to work with police to produce a "threat assessment" database, covering problems in the community that could affect the school, as well as identifying internal security issues.

The association is responding to widespread concern over school security, fuelled by highly publicised incidents such as the fatal stabbing of 12-year-old Nikki Conroy at a Cleveland school last year. Mr Cooper's work was commissioned before the death of Mr Lawrence earlier this month.

Mr Cooper, whose booklet

on the subject will be sent to more than 4,000 secondary schools, said: "Every school has got to have a security policy, but it is not just a matter of putting up iron bars. One of the important things in view of the Philip Lawrence tragedy, is not necessarily security inside the school. The school is affected by the community, and schools should have a database of information with a security threat assessment. If there is gang warfare in the community, it should become part of the school database. By working with the police you should be able to identify these potential threats."

Mr Cooper added: "Every one short-cuts security because it is the easiest burden to reduce at the time, but unfortunately that can have serious repercussions. The value of damage to schools is quite immense. This relates to the quality of life for our children but there is also a real commercial issue here."

The association is also jointly funding a video, called *What Price Security*, which will be available at a discount rate to schools from the end of next month.

The video features Beaufield School in Corby, Northamptonshire, which has closed circuit television cameras trained on its entrances. Leslie Ryder, of the video production company Focus in Education, said: "It looks at the problems of an open access site with playing fields and footpaths and raises the issue of whether it should be made like a stockade when truly it belongs to the community."

John Sutton, the general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said: "A lot of schools could do more to pay attention to their security. But we do not want schools to be seen as fortresses, they must strike a balance between the two."

Former pupils hit teachers at party

By PAUL WILKINSON

THREE teachers and a schoolgirl needed hospital treatment after being attacked by former pupils at the end of a school party.

Tony Brookes, 47, the headmaster of Thorne Grammar School near Doncaster, said the incident was terrifying. Ten of his staff were driven into the hall by punches and kicks and had to lock the doors for protection.

The police were called, but the five youths involved, aged 19 and 20, had vanished before they arrived. A full criminal investigation has begun. Police are interviewing staff and the dozens of pupils who attended the evening party last Thursday.

At the party itself, for 15 and 16-year-olds, there was no trouble with the pupils, and Mr Brookes said it had gone very well. But as the pupils left, a group of youths who had gathered outside began rattling doors and shouting.

Mr Brookes said: "Most of the pupils had left, but the youths started shouting abuse.

Two of them came storming in." Mike Sykes, 48, a senior teacher, was punched twice in the face and knocked down.

Mr Brookes said: "He started crawling to the school hall and we came to help him. I was punched in the face, and the other staff were stormed by all five of the youths, who started throwing punches. A female staff member was roughly up and had her coat ripped and a male teacher had his shirt torn off his back."

"We managed to get back into the hall and locked the doors. When police arrived, the gang ran off. No one was seriously injured but we did have grazes and bruises. Afterwards, we discovered that these people had rammed a girl pupil against a wall and bruised her ribs, so we took her to casualty as well."

"I always stand outside these Christmas parties to make sure the children leave safely and get home but I have never experienced anything like this in the nine years I have been head."

Law watchdog in the dock

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A NEW complaints system that would allow clients to challenge lawyers' fees and increase maximum compensation from £1,000 to £5,000 is called for by the Consumers' Association today.

The association says the Solicitors Complaints Bureau should be more independent and allow a wider range of complaints. It calls for reforms to make the bureau more effective, more easily accessed, fairer and swifter than the

present body, which is funded and staffed by the Law Society.

The association makes its proposals in its response to the Law Society's own consultation paper, which recommends scrapping the much-criticised bureau and setting up a new complaints system. "Clients who have lost money as a result of a solicitor's negligence have little effective redress," the association said.

There is widespread discon-

tent with the present £9 million-a-year bureau, both among solicitors, who perceive it as too interventionist and expensive to maintain, and among the public, which sees it as slow and ineffective.

Martin Mears, president of the Law Society, voiced the concerns of many solicitors when he pledged in his election manifesto this summer to overhaul the bureau and bring it firmly under Law Society control.



Piano practice: Felix Gummér, aged 14, taking the grand approach to studying music at Tonbridge School

Keyboards silence piano in fight for keys to the kingdom of music

By KATHARINE ROAD

TRADITIONAL piano playing in schools is falling drastically as pupils opt for electric keyboards in music lessons. It is feared that the choice could undermine children's ability to play, or appreciate, classical piano music.

Christopher Elton, head of piano at the Royal Academy of Music, says: "Keyboards cramp pupils' musical horizons. Mozart and Beethoven cannot be appreciated on a keyboard, and it becomes impossible to develop the touch and technique to play them."

Research shows that peer pressure is forcing many children to abandon the piano, with boys especially likely to choose more "macho" instruments, especially those favoured in the electronic sounds of pop musicians such as the Pet Shop

Boys. Dr Michael Boulton and Susan O'Neill at Keele University asked 153 children to choose which of six instruments they might like to play. There was agreement that boys generally should not play the piano. "It is not considered macho," they reported. "Boys more than girls consider the piano to be difficult."

The decline in popularity of the piano with younger generations is shown in a survey published earlier this year by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. While 12 per cent of all adults professed to playing the piano, only 8 per cent of children played. By contrast, the electronic keyboard was the second most popular instrument among children, after the recorder.

Part of the reason is cost. At

the top end of the market, a new Bechstein grand piano could cost £34,000. A second-hand upright piano usually costs £1,000 but in a sale one might be found for £500. Portable electronic keyboards start at less than £150 and digital pianos at £1,300.

George Clayton, managing director of the musical instrument specialists, Chappel of Bond Street, in London, said: "Portable keyboard sales are way up on last year over the Christmas period and this has been a definite trend over the past few years."

"People do not tend to buy pianos at Christmas — they usually wait for the sales — but sales of portable keyboards are much higher overall because they are generally much cheaper."

In schools, the added attraction of the compactness of the

keyboard provides the opportunity for group teaching, which relieves the cost of private tuition on the classical piano. But Mr Wright, head of piano at Ampleforth College, is strongly against the use of electric keyboards for music teaching. He said: "There is a great danger that starting pupils off on the small keys and limited touch of the keyboard makes it very difficult to switch to a piano and be able to produce a reasonable sound. We have keyboards here to help with A-level music harmony lessons and for occasional practice, but I would not dream of teaching on them."

Roger Durston, chairman of the UK Music Education Council, said that a study of the instruments played in specialist music school entrance examinations showed that "we are definitely seeing a drop in the number of children taking up the piano among new students."

Sales figures compiled by the Music Industry Association confirm the rise of the keyboard and the demise of the traditional piano over the period from 1988 to 1994.

During that time, the sales of portable keyboards, parts and accessories have risen by 3.04 per cent, compared with a drop of acoustic pianos by a significant 7.14 per cent. These shifts in sales are mirrored by the changes in relative cost.

The keyboard may have advantages other than cost. Hilary Davan Wetton, Director of Music at Tonbridge School in Kent, said: "The keyboard is no substitute for a piano, but it is a very good doorway to the fun of music in its own right."

Two men held over attack on widow

Two men have been arrested in connection with the mugging of an elderly woman in the early hours of Boxing Day.

The men, in their late teens and early 20s, are being questioned about the attack on Evelyn Stanford, 83, who was found unconscious and bleeding heavily by the roadside half a mile from her home in Wolverhampton. Mrs Stanford, a widow who lives alone, is in intensive care.

A motorist, who had seen her minutes earlier carrying a bag, found her with the bag missing. It is not clear why she was in the street at 12.30am.

Teenager dies after stabbing

Two young men were arrested in the hunt for the killer of Lee Marshall, 19, of Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne, who died in hospital of stab wounds. Meanwhile, police in the city were examining closed circuit television footage of the Bigg Market, where a man was shot dead on Christmas Eve.

Murder remand

Peter Moore, 49, the owner of a string of cinemas in North Wales, was remanded in custody by magistrates in Colwyn Bay, charged with the murder of an unidentified man in September. He already faces two other murder charges.

Hostage charge

Garry Lynch, 33, of Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, who is charged with unlawfully imprisoning a police officer in his own station on Christmas Eve and possessing a knife, was remanded in custody by Oxford magistrates.

Trains disrupted

Train services to and from the West Country were disrupted yesterday after a coach leaving Temple Meads station in Bristol was derailed. The third carriage of the Leeds to Plymouth train remained upright and nobody was injured.

Well read

A book has been returned 63 years late to a library in north London. Patrick Lovelock, 70, found the *Manual of Physical Training 1931* while redecorating. The senior librarian was so glad to see it he waived the £350 fine.

Cold night out

Paddy Faherty, 54, of Cladagh, Co Galway, was in hospital after spending a night at sea in his currach, a traditional open boat. A search was started when he failed to return on Boxing Day, but he turned up the next morning.

Twin ports seek ship for historic collection

By IAN MURRAY

PORTSMOUTH and Gosport are trying to buy a modern warship to complete a comprehensive display of Britain's maritime history. They already have an enviable collection, including the *Mary Rose*, the only warship surviving from Tudor times, and Nelson's flagship, the *Victory*. The last century is represented by the *Warrior*. The ports now want to display a 20th-century vessel as a tribute to those who sailed from Portsmouth to fight in recent wars.

The idea came up over five years ago and was backed by Gosport council, then Tory-controlled. At that stage, the Rotherham-class frigate *Plymouth*, which had been prominent in the Falklands War, was available. However, the Liberal Democrats then won control of the council after an election campaign in which they argued that funds should be spent on council services rather than redundant warships. The Warship Preservation Trust found a mooring for the *Plymouth* at Birkenhead.

The mood at Gosport has changed, now that a bid with Portsmouth to the Millennium Fund has won £40 million for the harbour to be revamped, and the two towns agree that they want a 20th-century warship for their collection. A berth in Gosport could be included in the new harbour, with the ship visible from Portsmouth as part of an historic backdrop including the other ships. A suitable ship is being sought, the *Plymouth* remaining a prime target.

Dog saves dog in underground trap

By LEVIA LINTON

A DOG wearing an electronic tracking device helped to rescue a terrier trapped in an underground maze of pipes for more than 24 hours.

Rosie, a fell terrier, had been out walking with Margaret Everett after Christmas dinner and vanished into a 6in-wide drainage pipe while pursuing a rabbit or fox. Mrs Everett and six relatives spent nearly an hour calling and whistling in vain. They returned to the spot at Colchester, Essex, seven times to look for the dog.

Finally, the owner telephoned the Fell and Moorland Working Terriers Club, which specialises in rescuing trapped dogs. Dave Smith, the local representative, and fellow member Dale Bullen searched for Rosie on Boxing Day. They fitted an electronic signal to the collar of Vic, Mr Bullen's Lakeland terrier, before sending it into the drainage net-

work. After about 30 minutes of tracking the dog's progress, they realised Vic had come to a halt 400 yards from the entrance to the drain. They spent nearly three hours digging 6½ft down into the frozen earth of a field until they uncovered the pipe, which they split with an axe. Seconds later, both dogs scampered into the daylight.

Rosie is believed to have become trapped in a section that was too narrow to turn round in. Mrs Everett said: "I was convinced she had gone for ever. We could not enjoy the rest of Christmas Day."

Mr Smith usually uses the location device to track dogs underground when hunting foxes. Mr Bullen said: "Vic is trained to follow a scent until he finds the source. Then he simply lies down and waits for us to trace him. Rosie barked with joy when she saw her owner."



Margaret Everett with Rosie, left, and Vic the rescuer

Vicar casts disciples as God intended

By PAUL WILKINSON

A COUNTRY vicar has set his flock talking with his set of explicit nude sculptures of Christ's disciples on show outside the vicarage.

The Rev Toddy Hoare, 47, a former art student and military padre, said: "People are beginning to spark a bit now they've seen them, but most of the comments have been favourable and nobody has suggested to me I've gone too far."

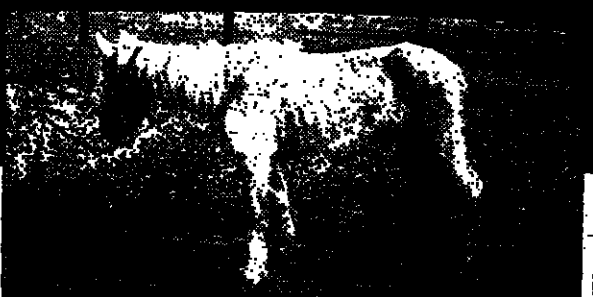
"We are all naked before God. The Gospels tell us that Peter was naked when he fished. God sees us as we are. No amount of dressing up will cover that. Some vicars write commentaries on the Bible but I've made a commentary in concrete."

Mr Hoare, who ministers to eight parishes near Thirsk in North Yorkshire, spent a three-month sabbatical creating the eight 6ft by 3ft panels in his studio, adjoining the vicarage at Knayton.

One parishioner, Gill Mayne of nearby Felddirk, said: "What these represent is beyond me. I don't think there is any necessity for exploiting nudity and especially full frontals. I am mystified why they have been done. They certainly wouldn't be hanging in my church."

Mr Hoare hopes to find a benefactor to enable him to cast the sculptures in bronze. Until then he plans to display the panels in the 17th-century church of Michael and All Angels at Cowesby, "where visitors can look, sit, think and meditate in a quiet place of worship".

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Novice spends \$7m to challenge Dole in party race

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

STEVE FORBES, the publishing tycoon, has climbed into second place behind Robert Dole in the race for the Republican presidential nomination.

Since entering the fray in late September, the 48-year-old political novice has poured more than \$7 million (£4.5 million) of his personal fortune into saturation advertising and is the only one of the nine Republican candidates whose support is noticeably increasing.

The latest poll in New Hampshire, site of the first primary on February 20, gives Mr Dole 35 per cent and Mr Forbes 16, with none of the other seven candidates in double figures.

He is untelegenic, a low-key speaker and a purveyor of distinctly unorthodox ideas, but recent polls put him narrowly ahead of the pack in Iowa, which holds the first significant caucuses on February 12. He is also doing well in Delaware and Arizona which have very early contests.

This is galling for Phil Gramm, the Texas senator who has spent roughly \$15 million to date but remains in single figures. It is infuriating for Lamar Alexander, the former Tennessee Governor whose support barely exceeds most polls' margin of error despite more than a year of

non-stop campaigning. Mr Dole is the only candidate who views Mr Forbes's rise with equanimity. He shares the universal view that his closest rival could never win the nomination, but is preventing Mr Gramm or Mr Alexander from emerging as the clear alternative to Mr Dole, thus tightening the Senate leader's hold on the nomination.

Mr Forbes is the grandson of a Scottish immigrant and collects the original papers of Winston Churchill as a hobby. He inherited a business publishing empire and a keen sense of fun from his flamboyant father Malcolm, who died in 1990 six months after throw-

ing a \$2 million 70th birthday party in Morocco.

Mr Forbes has already spent more on advertisements in Iowa than any other presidential candidate ever, and more than all 1988's 13 candidates combined, but insists that the blitz is working only because his message resonates. While his Republican rivals all talk of the need to cut spending and eliminate the deficit, Mr Forbes preaches the old supply-side optimism of the Reagan era.

He would scrap the present tax code entirely, replacing it with a single 17 per cent "flat tax" payable by all (this would personally save him an estimated \$128,000 a year). He would tie the dollar to the gold standard, arguing that inflation and interest rates would tumble. He wants to devolve responsibility not just to the states, as Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, aims to do, but wherever possible to the individual.

Mr Forbes believes that Washington's power and corruption derives from its ability to manipulate the complex tax code. "It's time to remove the dead weight of Washington and let the American economy run free," he says.

Friends say Mr Forbes is having the time of his life and is prepared to spend at least \$25 million on his campaign.



Forbes: ready to spend at least \$25 million

Hooligan fans lower Giants

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

HOOLIGANISM, of a sort, has reached American football. Fans at a New York Giants game, despairing of their team's poor performance, started a snowball fight. Fifteen people were arrested, 175 were ejected from the stadium, and national shame ensued.

Owing to the hard texture of the snow, the initially playful fight proved more dangerous than the action on the pitch between the Giants and the San Diego Chargers. Fifteen people were injured, a tele-

vision cameraman took a glancing blow to the arm, and the referees were pelted repeatedly. One ran for cover.

Every time the Chargers looked as though they might score, the air became thick with white bombs, hurled from the Giants' end. One or two Chargers fans were tempted to respond with snowballs of their own. Sid Brooks, a member of the Chargers' management, fell to the ground unconscious when a snowball hit him on the head.

Officials of the National

Football League reacted swiftly. Seventy-five season ticket holders have had their passes confiscated after being identified as culprits and a reward of \$1,000 (£653) has been offered for information leading to the arrest of one thrower, photographed mid-toss. Those ejected from the stadium included a lawyer, a schoolmaster, a retired senior police officer and a stockbroker. Confiscation of a season ticket is a harsh sanction, as there is a long waiting list for membership.



South Korean stock dealers applaud amid fluttering buying and selling order sheets during the ceremonial closing of another year's trading at the Stock Exchange Market building in the capital, Seoul, yesterday

Gun-toting grandmother wages battle for right to bear arms

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

BEFORE breakfast Marion Hammer decides whether to pack a slender Colt .38 Detective Special or a chunkier Beretta 9mm. The routine has changed little now she is at the helm of one of America's most powerful lobbies.

"What gun I carry really depends on what I'm wearing and what purse I'm carrying that day," says Mrs Hammer, the first female president of the National Rifle Association in its 125-year history. At 56, the chain-smoking grandmother is a far cry from the liberal stereotype of an NRA member.

The death of Thomas Washington, her moderate predecessor who sought to muffle the 3.3 million-strong organisation's controversial anti-gun control message, has brought Mrs Hammer to join Tanya Metaska - chief NRA

lobbyist since 1994 - in building the most determined and uncompromising defence of the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

"Some people may say I'm a woman in a man's job, but they are wrong," said Mrs Hammer at NRA headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia. "I am a woman in a patriot's job, freedom is gender-neutral."

Just 4ft 11in, Mrs Hammer first shot a gun on her grandfather's farm when five and became an activist after the Gun Control Act was signed in 1968, building a reputation among opponents as "Florida's Number One Gun Nut".

Ten years ago, she was followed into a Florida car park late one night by six youths who threatened to rape and kill her. "They were carrying bottles which they



Hammer: arrived as NRA faces crossroads

were going to use on me, so I reached into my purse and pulled out my gun. One screamed 'the bitch has a gun' and they just fled."

She has arrived in Fairfax at an important time for the NRA, which suffered withering attacks and falling support when a membership letter, sent before the Oklahoma City bombing in April, was leaked to the media.

President Clinton seized on its portrayal of federal law enforcement agents as "jack-booted government thugs" as evidence that the organisation fomented the type of hatred that led to the blast, which killed 169 adults and children. Former President George Bush resigned his lifetime NRA membership in disgust.

But by citing the 1993 Waco siege and the siege of a white separatists' Idaho cabin as examples of federal agents running amok, Mrs Hammer and her allies won overwhelming national conference support.

Chinese choose favoured tycoons

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHINA will name today the 150 men and women it has selected to transform the British colony of Hong Kong into a Chinese Special Administrative Region. News reports indicated last night that those chosen, while representing the colony's business elite, will exclude members of its largest political party.

The preparatory committee will establish the government which will take over at midnight on June 30, 1997, and will also decide how to select the first chief executive to take over from Chris Patten, the British Governor, and also a provisional legislature to assume power from the elected political body China has said it will ignore.

Among the names, a who's who of rich Hong Kong business tycoons, are property magnates Li Ka-shing, and Lee Shau-kee, who are regarded as the territory's wealthiest men, according to Chinese sources. The majority - 94 members - were from Hong Kong, in keeping with Peking's dictum of "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong".

Up to 34 of that list were business representatives. Absent, however, are representatives of British-oriented firms such as Swire Pacific and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, and members of the Democratic Party, who despite success in September's legislative polls are regarded by Peking as subversives.

Fourteen members of the colony's 60-member Legislative Council were named, according to the list carried by the well-informed Chinese-language newspaper *Ming Pao*, but these did not include members of the Democratic Party. Former civil servants and representatives from academic, religious and rural organisations are in the list.

Leading article, page 15

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T114

NEWS IN BRIEF

Policemen in cult did the killing

Grenoble: Two French policemen were responsible for the massacre that left 16 members of the Order of the Solar Temple dead in France last week, it emerged yesterday (Adam Sage writes).

The policemen, both members of the cult, shot 14 other cult followers, including three children, before turning the guns on themselves. Jean-François Lurans, the prosecutor here, said. The charred bodies were found in a forest on Saturday, a year after 53 members of the sect died in Switzerland and Canada.

Wei appeal

Peking: China's Higher People's Court is due to hear Wei Jingsheng's appeal against a 14-year jail term for conspiracy today, shortly after a White Paper hailed "great advances in human rights". (Reuters)

Koreans jailed

Seoul: A South Korean father and son who owned a department store here which collapsed in June, killing more than 500 people, were jailed for ten and seven years for criminal negligence. (Reuters)

Pole to poles

Warsaw: Marek Kaminski, a Polish adventurer, has become the first person to hike to the North and South Poles in the same year. A Norwegian earlier reached both poles, but in different years. (AP)

Algiers shoot-out

Algiers: Two policemen, one soldier and two Islamic activists were killed in a shoot-out in Algiers after the militants tried to rob a shop. A policeman and two civilians were injured. (AFP)

Chemicals held

Amman: Jordan has seized a large consignment of toxic chemicals and a machine for making missile parts bound for Iraq in violation of United Nations sanctions, its Foreign Ministry said. (Reuters)

Peking declares war on porn

BY JAMES PRINGLE

THEY are thrust at you in central Peking. CD-Roms featuring lurid pictures of scantily dressed women and bearing the words, still rather shocking to see in Communist China, in explicit Anglo-Saxon terms.

Nowadays, pornography is

freely available in the Chinese capital. But all that may soon change. If the Chinese Customs Department is to be believed. Yesterday, officials were reported to have pledged to intensify efforts to stop the influx of "moral toxin". From January until last month, the *China Daily* reported, 560,000 items were seized, up

69 per cent over the 1994 period. In Canton, 1,187 attempts at smuggling high-tech porn were thwarted.

"This dirty media, if not forcibly curbed, could pollute the social environment, poison youngsters and damage social stability by inducing more crimes," a customs report said.

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Easy riders join rush west to high-speed Montana

Montana, the fourth biggest state and one of America's emptiest, has scrapped speed limits on its main roads. Not everyone is happy. "Made us the joke of the nation," Darrick Wakefield, a Highway Patrol Officer, said in his Ford Crown Victoria patrol car. As he spoke, a Chevrolet Camaro screamed past at 95mph, its speed flashing up on the Ford's traffic monitor. Regret twinged under Mr Wakefield's nostrils.

The end of the federal 55mph limit has not only quickened paces and reduced journey times across Montana's vast wilderness, but has also brought death, impudence and an influx of out-of-state speed maniacs. When the federal limit disappeared on December 8, most state governments set new ones, but in Montana, in daytime, there is now no official maximum speed for cars and vans.

The police saw an immediate effect: three fatal crashes around the state's main town of Billings (population 80,000) and one serious injury. Enthusiasts on the East Coast meanwhile wrote to ask if they could bring their sports cars to Montana for a rally down the interstate. A Porsche driver out west was said to be boasting that he drove the 350 miles from Missoula to Billings in less than three hours.

In homage to Germany's limit-free motorways, adrenalin junkies are talking of the "Montanabahn". Quite a bahn it is, too. From the Bitterroots Mountains near Idaho to the Custer National Forest on the Dakota borders. Port of Wild Horse in the north to Clark Canyon in the south, deserted roads stretch to the horizon, boarded by white peaks and foaming creeks. If ever a land was made for full throttle, this is it.

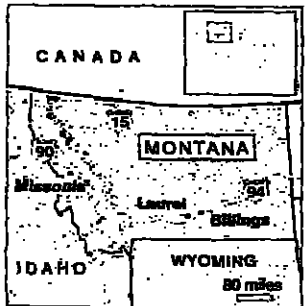
Montana is attracting easy riders from other states who rev up the moment they cross the state line. On Interstate 90, I was overtaken by two Ford Mustangs racing each other, their huge engines quivering with the effort of hitting a three-figure speed.

The lack of a limit matches Montana's libertarian instincts. Since the days of the

Drivers around the US are being drawn to the 'Montanabahn', where the scrapping of the speed limit has raised safety fears. Quentin Letts follows in their slipstream

19th century outlaws "Rattlesnake" Jack and "Liver Eating" Johnson (the liked Sioux odd), the state has had its share of wild folk.

To the north of Billings there now live the "Freedom men of Montana", an anti-federal militia whose members refuse to



pay taxes or carry driving licences. At Desperados country music bar on the outskirts of Billings, a ranch hand called Jo said it was "time to chuck ass on the highway".

Teenage drivers whooped at the dismantling of the roadside speed signs, but one of those early fatalities resulted from a schoolgirl driving past a Stop sign at high speed. Mr Wakefield added that speed offences used to allow the police to pull over shifty-looking motorists. He once apprehended a gang of armed robbers that way. "Now we're walking on eggshells when we stop people," he said. "People in Montana think they have more rights than elsewhere."

"Shorty" Spang, a Ford sales manager in Billings, said that he hoped to sell "a few more Mustang GTs" but at a coffee shop in Laurel, four farmers expressed safety fears. "Modern cars are not strong enough for 90 miles an hour," said Bob Miller from under a broad cowboy hat.

Wild animals are a road hazard in the American West. Deer, elk, moose and wild horses wander freely. If struck by a lorry only the animals are killed, but hit one in a car at 100mph and you will need more than a new windscreen.



Letts, page 15

Quentin Letts takes a break from driving through the wide open spaces in Montana, where he cruised legally in his rented car at 115 mph

Horsepower heaven in Custer country

THE fastest vehicle on offer at the Billings airport car hire desk was a Mercury Mystique, a moderately brisk sedan whose British equivalent might be a Ford Mondeo or a Peugeot 405 (Quentin Letts writes). The assistant said that everything else had been rented out — perhaps I was not the only one visiting Montana to speed.

The Mercury's 16-valve, two-litre engine felt comfortable at 90mph, but with some coaxing it produced a top speed of 115mph on a long,

straight, gloriously empty stretch of road west of Little Big Horn, the site of Custer's last stand.

Montana's roads generally have far less traffic than the German autobahn or French A and B roads. However, Highway Patrol officers can still issue a ticket to those driving dangerously or with undue regard for fellow motorists. West of Billings are lands once known by Indians as "sacred hunting grounds". Some police still see them in much the same way.

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West Bank city of Ramallah transferred to Palestinians ahead of schedule

Clinton optimistic as Syrians reopen talks with Israelis

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI and Syrian negotiators yesterday launched a new round of peace talks at a bucolic retreat on Maryland's eastern shore, and American officials were optimistic that the Middle East's most implacable foes could reach an initial peace agreement by mid-spring.

The talks began as Israel transferred control of the Arab city of Ramallah to the Palestinian Authority, completing a redeployment of troops on the West Bank one day ahead of schedule.

The American Administration sees the talks as the start of the final drive towards a comprehensive Middle East peace, and President Clinton said he believed the peace process that began after the Gulf War could be completed in the "fairly near term".

Syria and Israel remain divided on the terms of Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights, territory it captured in 1967, but Washington has been encouraged by recent private and public statements by Shimon Peres, the Israeli

New York: Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, has been ordered to give evidence in an American court over the 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking. A US travel agency which booked passengers on the ill-fated cruise is suing the PLO for involvement in the hijacking, during which a wheelchair-bound passenger was shot and thrown overboard.

Prime Minister, and President Assad of Syria.

The talks broke off six months ago over Israel's demand to keep an early warning system to guard against a surprise Syrian attack. Negotiations reopened yesterday at the Wye Plantation, a stately old southern mansion an hour from Washington. The delegations were led by Uri Savir, director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and Walid al-Moualemi, Syria's Ambassador to Washington. The

talks were guided by Dennis Ross, the State Department's Middle East expert.

The talks will be adjourned tomorrow and resume next week after the negotiators have reported back to their governments. Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, is scheduled to return to the Middle East on January 10.

At the Ramallah hand-over ceremony, Gabi Ophir, the Israeli military commander on the West Bank, wished his Palestinian counterpart success in maintaining security for all residents, including Israelis who live near by.

Ahmed Tibi, an adviser to Yasser Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader, sought to allay the fears of Israelis that cities such as Ramallah would become bases for terrorist attacks against Jews.

Editor held: PLO security forces have arrested Maher al-Alami, an editor at the Palestinian newspaper *al-Quds*, for not printing a report about Mr Arafat on the front page, journalists reported. (Reuters)



Palestinian youths in Ramallah wave pistols in the military compound during a brief interval yesterday between departure of Israeli troops and arrival of Palestinian police

Elusive Golan deal is key to wider peace

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ABOUT 1,800 sq km captured by Israel from Syria in 1967 and held during the 1973 Yom Kippur war has become the key to a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.

For almost 28 years this strategic settlement, known as the Golan Heights, has been a gigantic watchtower for Israel in the first line of defence against any possible invasion by Syria. As recently as August 1994, Ehud Barak, Israel's then military Chief of Staff, said: "From a military standpoint, the Israeli Defence Forces must retain control of the Golan Heights, even in peacetime."

However, times have changed and Mr Barak is now the Foreign Minister in the Government of Shimon Peres, who is prepared to hand back the area to Syria in return for peace in the region. Mr Peres has made it clear that a treaty with Syria should pave the way for peace with all countries in the Middle East, starting with Lebanon, which is effectively under Syrian control.

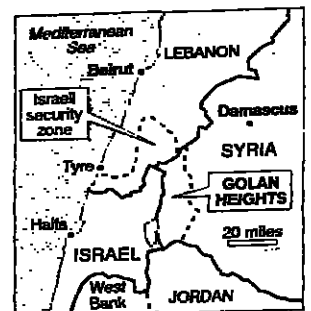
The Prime Minister has said that Israel is willing to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon provided that Syria, which has 40,000 soldiers in the country, can guarantee an end to attacks by members of the pro-Iranian Islamic Hezbollah organisation. For years Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon have threatened the citizens of northern Israel.

Reaching an agreement with Syria will not be easy, and the secret negotiations between Israeli and Syrian officials which began in Washington yesterday are expected to take months to resolve difficult issues, particularly those surrounding the future of the Golan Heights. Syria is demanding a complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from lines occupied by both sides on

June 4, 1967, and the evacuation of all of the estimated 13,000 Jewish settlers in the area.

In the past Israel has appeared determined to hold on to about 60 sq km of the Golan Heights, in order to retain effective control over the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the country's main source of drinking water. However, Syria wants control over all water resources on the Golan Heights, amounting to about 300 million cubic metres of water per year, which flows into the Jordan River and then to the Sea of Galilee.

In previous talks between the two countries, Israel has



also insisted that it be allowed early-warning military stations in the Golan Heights to prevent surprise attacks by Syria. Damascus has rejected the notion of such stations and said that Israel should settle for satellite surveillance of the region.

Israel has recently shown signs of being flexible over this issue and agreement could hinge on the willingness of Syria to agree to a large demilitarised zone along the Israeli border. Israel also wants Syria to reduce the size of its military force. Should the negotiators be able to reach agreement over these thorny issues, Mr Peres will also demand that Syria agrees to full diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.

Fate of negotiations rests with Arabs' master strategist

BY MICHAEL THEODOULOU



Assad: now a useful ally

PRESIDENT ASSAD of Syria, the Arab world's master strategist, who has used patience, guile and stubbornness to command a leading role on the regional and world stage, hopes to crown a turbulent quarter of a century in power by winning back the Golan Heights.

Arab diplomats say it was the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, that persuaded Mr Assad to return to the peace table after a six-month gap. "It finally convinced him there was a genuine rift between the Israeli Right and Left. Before, he thought it was only a

negotiating tactic," one said. Syrian insiders said, if all went well, the two sides would sign a declaration of principle after three months in which Rabin's successor, Shimon Peres, would commit Israel to returning the Golan Heights. But the withdrawal would not be enacted until after Israeli elections in October. The promise of peace would boost Mr Peres's election hopes without risking a backlash if settlers are moved from the Golan.

Mr Assad, who led Syria in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and nearly regained the Golan, was once described by Israel as its most dangerous enemy. He thundered against Arab moderates, courted Kremlin bosses and

forced the United States into a withdrawal from Lebanon. But his Machiavellian skills commanded respect from his adversaries. For Henry Kissinger, Mr Assad was "the most interesting man in the Middle East".

Peace now would guarantee Mr Assad the international respectability he has craved. His transformation under Western eyes from a sponsor of terrorism to a useful ally began when he sent his forces to join the international coalition against Iraq in 1990. The astute move also helped to end his isolation in the Arab world after Syria's support of Iran in its eight-year war with Iraq. Washington made no protest when Mr Assad's troops

crushed the forces of the rebel Christian general, Michel Aoun, in Lebanon which, after 15 years of civil war, was forced to accept a Damascus-backed Government. Then in 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Syria's superpower ally, Mr Assad opened peace talks with Israel.

Few remember the Hindawi affair, when Syria was accused of attempting to blow up an El Al jet at Heathrow in 1986, or that Syrian-based radicals were first accused of the Lockerbie disaster. More remote still is his suppression in 1982 of the fundamentalist challenge to his secular rule in the city of Hama, which left an estimated 20,000 dead.

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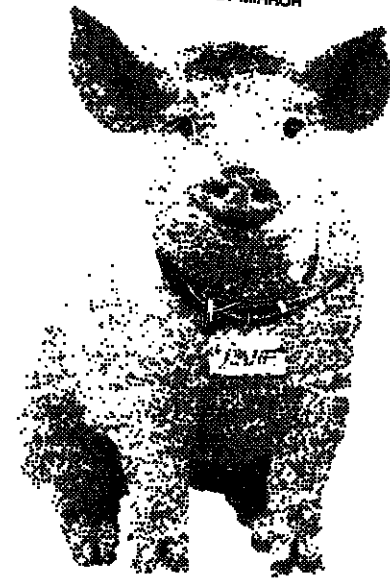
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Rocket attack on French security van kills guard

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

ROBBERS armed with rocket launchers and machineguns carried out a spectacular attack on a security van in France yesterday, killing a guard before escaping with a large sum of cash.

Two other guards were injured in the attack, which occurred at night on the motorway linking Lille and Paris. Detectives believe the assault might have been the work of a Belgian gang which carried out a similar raid near Brussels last week.

Early yesterday, up to ten gangsters, all hooded and wearing black clothing, forced the van to stop by laying barbed wire at a motorway exit five miles south of Lille, blocking escape with two cars. A witness said they were all carrying machineguns.

When the three-man crew refused to get out, taking

refuge in the back of the truck, the gang blew open the doors with rocket launchers, the witness said. The guard who died in the explosion was a father of three. The other two were hit in the legs, but last night doctors said that their lives were not in danger.

Police said the crew did not have time to return fire, such was the speed of the attack. More than 60 spent shells were found on the ground.

Although the value of the haul has not been disclosed, the van was carrying a large amount since it had been collecting takings from supermarkets around Lille. Officers said only four bags of cash were found at the scene, implying that many more had disappeared.

One of the witnesses was a van driver who was following the security van down the slip

road when it was attacked. "They pointed their guns at me," he told French radio. "They told me to get out. I got out and I ran."

Detectives said the attack could be linked to a raid on a security van on a motorway on the outskirts of Brussels. A gang blocked the van with two lorries before opening fire with machineguns on the crew. The Belgian guards shot back and managed to fight off the attackers. A child was injured.

The guard killed yesterday was the first person to die in an attack on a security van for 18 months in France. However, in a country where the murder rate is higher than in Britain, such incidents are by no means rare. Fifteen people have died in assaults on security vans in France since 1990.



Flash floods swept through the French Army camp at Mostar in south Bosnia yesterday, forcing dozens of Foreign Legionnaires attached to the Nato peace force to be airlifted to safety by helicopter (Our Foreign Staff writes). Major Ben-

Nato troops airlifted from Bosnian floods

nard Noblet said: "We have evacuated 62 men by helicopter so far. At this hour there are no human losses."

The peace accord passed a crucial test, however, as the warring factions vacated designated positions along Sarajevo's front line by yesterday's midnight deadline. Under the terms of the agreement, rival military forces were required to withdraw

from about 40 flashpoints. As they prepared to give up their positions on Mount Trebevic, the Bosnian Serb soldiers appeared dejected. "We are very confused," said one. "We've had so many conflicting orders over the past three days."

Spanish election set for March

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

SPANIARDS will go to the polls on March 3 and either re-elect the Socialist leader, Felipe González, who formally announces the date to his Cabinet today, or—as predicted—trigger the first change of government since 1982.

The general election, the seventh since democracy was restored to Spain after the death of Franco in 1975, is being called a year early by Señor González, whose minority Government has been hit by a series of scandals. It will coincide with regional elections in the Socialist's traditional stronghold of Andalusia.

The main opposition in the Cortes, the centre-right Popular Party, has tried to capitalise on Señor González's self-inflicted misfortunes. But its slender six-point lead in opinion polls shows that José María Aznar, its leader, needs to offer a more constructive alternative than hostile criticism.

The Spanish courts decided this week that only seven of the original 39 people accused of illegally financing the Socialist Party will face trial, while the brother of Alfonso Guerra, the deputy party leader, received his third sentence for corruption.

At his trial on Tuesday on charges of tax evasion, Juan Guerra was sentenced to 18 months in prison, which he is not expected to serve, fined £250,000 and ordered to pay £200,000 to the Treasury.

Bardot says her crusade to save seals has failed

BY ADAM SAGE

BRIGITTE BARDOT believes her crusade to save the baby seal has failed. In an interview yesterday with the French newspaper *Le Parisien Libéré* she said: "I have reached the limit of my capabilities. I cannot fight against the financial interests."

Her comments came 18 years after she attracted world attention to the culling of white baby seals, being photographed with them in the middle of an ice floe. The crusade began the transformation of her image from Fifties sex kitten to the best-known animal rights militant.

Although white seals are no longer culled, largely as a result of her efforts, they can be killed as soon as they moult, from the age of 15 days. This year Norway has authorised the culling of 17,000 young seals. Canada has increased its quota from 186,000 to 287,000 seals.

"I am 61 years old and I cannot return to the ice floe as I did at 43, especially when I

see the slim success of this type of campaign," Madame Bardot said in the interview. "I am desperate. I thought I had obtained something and it is as though nothing at all has happened."

In 1977 the world reacted very well and was conscious of the cruelty of what was happening. Things have gone back exactly as they were before. Even if they are killed at 16 days rather than 15, they are still babies, even if their fur is no longer white. It is pure hypocrisy. News of the latest culls is a terrible Christmas present for me."

Fishermen say the seals have to be killed because they eat the fish stock. But the former film star said: "It is not the seals which are decimating them, but drift nets and industrial-scale fishing by the Russians, Spanish and South Koreans. We must not blame the seals, who have been there for millions of years and who always eat their poor quota of fish, for what we humans are responsible for."

Paris: France will carry out the fifth nuclear test in its current series today, *Le Canard Enchaîné* reported yesterday. But sources close to the Government said the test was being conducted last night, Paris time.

The weekly said French nuclear scientists had planned to carry out the low-power test in French Polynesia on December 22, but it was delayed at the request of Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister.

The report also said President Chirac was in a hurry to get the sixth and final test over with in January, ahead of a planned visit to the United States in February. (AFP)



Bardot: "I cannot fight financial interests"

Feminist pirate fails to make a killing at the box office

BY GILES WHITTELL

JUST when Hollywood thought it was safe to go back into the water, a \$120 million (£77 million) feminist pirate epic has fulfilled dire predictions by failing disastrously at the American box office.

Six months late and some \$30 million over budget, *Cutthroat Island* is making Kevin Costner's *Waterworld* look like a model of sound film economics. The new film stars Geena Davis, who made her name in *Thelma and Louise*. Despite her swashbuckling turn as a oft prostitute-cum-buccaneer, it took in a token

\$2.4 million on its opening weekend.

Dismal Christmas attendances were partly due to a critical drubbing. "Like a slow voyage aboard the Pinafore", was the *Washington Post* verdict, while the *Los Angeles Times* bewailed a "weary rehash of every pirate movie under the sun" that might, at best, cure Ms Davis of "her Errol Flynn obsession".

Production nightmares began when Michael Douglas, the \$8 million male lead, walked out, citing a need to spend more time with his wife.

He was also said to be upset at having less dialogue than his co-star.

Tom Cruise, Keanu Reeves and Liam Neeson all declined the role of Calico Jack, sidekick to Ms Davis's pirateess, for fear of languishing in her shadow, insiders said.

The Finnish director, Renny Harlin—Ms Davis's husband—refused to have her part rewritten. Mr Harlin, whose producers had threatened to abort the project, risked his reputation by taking out a full-page advertisement in *Daily Variety*, the trade paper, promising a heart-stopping blockbuster on a par with his previous successes such as *Cliffhanger* and *Die Hard 2*.

Instead he has delivered for the financially strapped MGM/United Artists studio what is known as a turkey.

Cutthroat Island was spared the storms that plagued the \$175 million *Waterworld*—its set sank off Hawaii—but was not helped when Italian technicians walked out after one suffered a crushed leg, nor when Ms Davis went down with heat exhaustion and food poisoning in Thailand.

The only believable buccaneer, the hard-drinking Oliver Reed, was fired after allegedly dropping his trousers in front of the director and his wife.



Geena Davis: struck low by heat and food poisoning

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T14

How a newborn baby could help to save a child's life

A special blood bank offers hope to young leukaemia victims, says Jeremy Laurence

CHARLOTTE Schroder is a one-in-a-million child. The mop-haired five-year-old has bone marrow so rare that the worldwide donor list failed to turn up a single person with compatible cells.

For Charlotte and her parents, the failure to find a matched donor was devastating. She has leukaemia and is undergoing her second two-year course of chemotherapy.

Her best chance of a cure has been a bone-marrow transplant. But this month a new kind of blood bank has opened in Britain offering hope for children like Charlotte. The cord blood bank will bank blood taken from the umbilical cords of newborn babies. Cord blood is unique because it contains a high proportion of the stem cells, also found in bone marrow, which replenish the body's red and white blood cells.

If Charlotte's second course of chemotherapy fails — and there is only a 20 per cent chance that it will succeed — she will need whole-body radiotherapy to eliminate the leukaemia. As a result her bone marrow will be destroyed, which is why she needs a donor.

Because cord blood is immature, it does not require such stringent matching. For an ordinary bone-marrow transplant at least five out of the six antigens (proteins) in the marrow must match. For cord blood, it is possible that a transplant will take with as few as four antigens matched.

Among the first donors to the bank was Charlotte's sister Anna, now aged six months. When Ellen Schroder, their mother, became pregnant with Anna, she was told there was a one in four chance that her marrow would be a perfect match for Charlotte's. "I had



Charlotte's best hope for a donor was her baby sister, Anna, but ironically, her bone marrow matched brother Ben's

the amniocentesis test on Anna early in pregnancy. She was only a half match to Charlotte. Worse, she was a complete match to her brother, Ben."

She knows the best chance of saving her daughter is to spread news of her predicament as far and wide as possible in the hope of finding a donor. The launch of the cord blood bank could provide the lifeline Charlotte needs.

Research on cord blood is being carried out in several centres in Britain, including Bristol, Newcastle and Belfast. But the London bank, which is part of the National Blood Service, and based at Colindale, is the first to begin taking routine donations.

Placentas, normally disposed of after birth, will be collected at Edgware General

Hospital and samples of blood will be taken from the cord. Consent will be sought from the mothers.

The scheme is the brainchild of Dr Marcela Contreras, director of the North London Blood Service. A Chilean refugee, she is a woman with restless energy and a passionate commitment.

"Cord blood was wasted," she says. "In using it, the mother doesn't suffer and the infant doesn't suffer. On the bone marrow register it can take three to six months to arrange for a donor. With the cord blood bank it will take a maximum of two weeks."

Only 100 cord blood transplants have been performed worldwide and none has yet been undertaken in the UK.

The use of the word transplant makes the procedure sound more complex than it is. The cord blood, which is stored in liquid nitrogen, after collection, is thawed out and infused directly into a vein. The stem cells find their way to the patient's bone marrow and begin making blood cells. The procedure is painless and takes about 30 minutes.

Initially only children and adults — weighing under eight stone — have been treated because of the small volume of blood collected from each cord. Attempts are being made to grow stem cells in the laboratory, expanding the volume available for transplant. If successful, this could allow cord blood to be used to treat adults.

In the US, the use of cord blood is now an accepted

treatment. The largest bank, in New York, holds 5,000 samples. The London cord bank aims to collect 1,500 samples in the first year and a key advantage over the bone marrow registers is that blood from all ethnic groups will be collected. Mrs Schroder is hoping that a sample will turn up that offers her daughter an acceptable match. Failing that, her doctors may go ahead using her sister's cord blood in the hope that its immaturity will minimise the problems of graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) that can result if the blood is not a close match.

"That is the worst thing that could happen. The child is saved from leukaemia but has GVHD for life, with scaly skin rashes, permanent stomach ache and constant diarrhoea. It's a grim picture," she says.

Why cold turns the thinly clad British true blue

In patriotic vein

A GLANCE around the bar of the George and Dragon at Cley at this time of year reveals a remarkable number of red faces and blue hands. The high colour seen in many outdoor workers, which is particularly obvious in the winter, is not because of any excessive fondness for Greene King beers, or even something stronger, but because their faces have been lashed by freezing winds blowing off the icy north Norfolk marshes.

In Britain we brave the elements without wrapping up adequately, and our houses are not kept as warm as they would be in Scandinavia or North America. Countries which know that every winter is going to be as bad as it is now in the Shetland Islands are prepared, and their inhabitants have learnt not to wander around in the snow, hatless and wearing short jackets.

The inevitable result of being unprepared for icy conditions is that the peripheral circulation is tested — and unfortunately, in a cold snap, 10 per cent of the British population's circulation fails the test.

A chilblain, the most obvious result of extreme cold, is caused by narrowing of the blood vessels just below the skin. This vascular constriction starves the skin and subcutaneous tissue of necessary oxygen and nutrients, with the result that they become red, itchy, swollen and sometimes painful. Various remedies have been tried, ranging from increased vitamin intake to vasodilator drugs. If any work at all, none works well.



MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttford

Soothing ointments are the best local remedy but the answer is to wear warm clothing, including gloves, to keep the hands and feet dry, for damp favours chilblains. Children and the elderly are most at risk.

Equestrian chilblains, an interesting variant to those found on the hands and feet, are pictured in the *Oxford Textbook of Medicine*. These attack the upper thighs and buttocks of riders, particularly women, whose jodhpurs are too tight. The combination of a thicker layer of subcutaneous fat, pressure from the jodhpurs, and the damp proves too much for the skin of those who venture out on a frosty, damp morning.

The changes in response to persistent cold are known as pernio and affect not only the skin, but also the subcutaneous fat. The effect of this long-term cold is for limbs to develop a thicker skin and deeper layers of fat. The girth of the thighs in cold climates depends partly on the length of the skirt — the longer the skirt, the less plump the legs, so that when there is a fashion for very short skirts, there may be some heavy legs in the spring. Likewise there may also be an epidemic of spider veins, which occur when the skin is insulated by a thick layer of fat from the warmer, deeper, more vascular zone.

Older people should be careful not to bake their cold legs in front of a warm fire. The result can be permanent mottling, livedo reticularis.

Toys that are easy to swallow



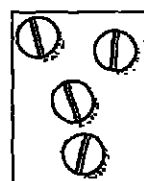
WHEN I was a casualty officer one Christmas many years ago, two small children were brought into the department within minutes of each other, suffering from severe breathing difficulties.

The same disaster had befallen both as they played beneath their Christmas trees. They had inhaled the heads of toy soldiers — for at that time the soldier's head could swivel or, with a determined pull by a child, the guardsman could be decapitated.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports on a survey of what children swallow or inhale these days. Balloons, marbles and small balls were the objects most likely to obstruct airways, and therefore the most dangerous toys.

The authors of the report would like to see the diameter of all children's toys increased to more than 4.44 centimetres. They also give warning that children are not out of danger from inhalation or swallowing of toys until they are over six. Children over three are, in fact, those most likely to come to grief when playing with balloons.

Parkinson's drug safety fears



PARKINSON'S disease affects one person in a hundred over 65, and a third of those in that age group have similar symptoms but are not affected by the classic degeneration of neurones in the substantia nigra of the brain. Parkinson's can also start much earlier, and is seen quite often in patients in their 40s and 50s.

In recent years, a drug called Eldepryl (selegiline) has been recommended to delay the onset of disabling symptoms and postpone the need to use levodopa, the drug most often prescribed for Parkinson's disease.

After a trial of 500 patients, reported in the *British Medical Journal*, doubts have been expressed about Eldepryl's safety when taken with some antidepressants, and also about its possible effect on vulnerable arteries in the heart or brain.

Medical Monitor, a journal for general practitioners, quotes a spokesman from the Parkinson's Disease Association who recommends that patients should continue to take the drug, but discuss it with their doctors. Previous studies have not shown any increased mortality in those taking Eldepryl.

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Janet Daley



■ Since knife attack is becoming fashionable as a crime among the young, it is essential that some specific step be taken

The widow of Philip Lawrence has said that her husband would have been embarrassed by the adulation which made him Radio 4's Personality of the Year. Such is the response of the hero to praise: it was only doing my job. Mrs Lawrence's description of her late husband as being 'modest to the point of self-deprecation' seems of a piece with the rest of his behaviour, which was based on the almost forgotten principle that one accepts one's responsibilities without hesitation or complaint.

Mrs Lawrence has requested that his memory be commemorated in a more lasting way: that society somehow rededicate itself to defeating the forces of violence.

Being modest herself, she would not say so, but I suspect that she would like to see her husband's death become a turning point — for all the strength of moral outrage and sympathy that it has evoked to be channelled into a crusade against the mindless urban brutality which now

If tribes of youths carry knives, that should be amenable to remedy

So what is to be done? Given that Mrs Lawrence has probably expressed the desire of hundreds of thousands of people, what would it mean to act on such a wish? If she were to be granted her request for a public forum — a commission of politicians and churchmen and ordinary people — to devote themselves to the problem of violence, what could we expect from it? What would plausible solutions be as opposed to predictable platitudes — look like?

Mrs Lawrence is right to say that the malaise — and the public fear — go far beyond the matter of knife-carrying. One father who made the mistake of trying to defend his home was beaten almost fatally with a brick. Others who have intervened to stop vandals have been kicked to death.

But if there is to be any hope at all of coming to grips with the mess we are now in, we must break it down into manageable parts. And in the case of Philip Lawrence's own death, the immediate cause was the proliferation of knife-carrying. If there are lawless tribes of youths marauding through our cities, then that is a problem of such huge proportions that it defies any simple analysis, but if those hordes are now universally equipped with knives, then that is a particular fact which should be amenable to remedy.

Knife attack is becoming fashionable as a crime among the young. The carrying of a knife has itself become a sign of initiation into criminal street culture. If this trend is not to become

entrenched, it is absolutely essential that some quite specific step be taken. There is an intriguing parallel between the rise of robbery at knife point and the notorious Victorian crime of garrotting. That too became a criminal fashion, provoking enormous public alarm and popular condemnation in the press.

From 1861 to 1863, there had been a sudden wave of street robberies using this peculiarly terrifying method. A gang — usually consisting of three people — would attack from behind, one slipping a rope around the victim's neck. With a force that threatened strangulation, the victim's head would be pulled backwards to immobilise him. A second attacker struck him repeatedly from the front while the third kept watch. A third keeping watch ensured that the whole swift operation could be carried out even in areas that police regularly patrolled.

The success of the technique — which was marked by gratuitous ferocity, not unlike the more savage muggings of recent years — led to hubris. Just as the

knife gives Dutch courage to young criminals now, the garrotters emerged boldly from their usual territory of the East End into the most respectable parts of London. So confident did they become that they no longer

sought dark alleyways but carried out their attacks in broad daylight — as knife-wielding assassins often do now. In 1862, an MP walking from Parliament to his club in Pall Mall was garrotted in a well-lit spot. None of the five policemen walking the area heard an untoward sound.

Inevitably, garrotting led to deaths. One victim's throat was crushed, another died of the wounds he suffered in a struggle with his attackers. As now, the public was enraged and frightened by this apparently unstoppable wave of incidents. Vigilantes who sought out the gangs were apparently so fearful of themselves as to strike terror into passers-by. The Victorians, less encumbered by class guilt and moral ambivalence than we are, took the steps that seemed to be called for: the Garrotting Act of 1863 prescribed flogging for convicted offenders and the police improved their tactics of surveillance so that arrests became far more frequent. By 1865, garrotting had virtually died out.

Call it what you will — moral panic, middle-class vengeance or a secure belief in the right of law-abiding people to safety — the Victorians had what we singularly lack: the political will to enforce their social values. Without that, I fear we are lost.

Poet Padraic Pearse had a romantic vision for Ireland, but he was executed by the English in 1916

Death of a dreamer

Every educated person in Ireland knows who Padraic Pearse was, but hardly anyone in England remembers. That is an example of the crass ignorance which made the English govern Ireland so badly for some 750 years.

He does not even appear in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which has room for many less important Irish figures. The 80th anniversary of his death will be this April; what he wrote, what he did, and what he believed in remain very relevant to the future of the peace process and the history of modern Ireland.

Padraic Pearse was a poet, one of the best Irish poets of his time. His own poetry was mainly written in the Irish language, though he also translated poetry from Irish into English. His Irish poetry was itself translated by Thomas MacDonagh, another name which will be quite familiar to Irish readers but is almost unknown to the English. MacDonagh translated Padraic Pearse's poem *To Death*; it has been taken as an epitaph.

*I have not gathered gold;
The fame that I won perished;
In love I found but sorrow,
That withered my life.*

*Of wealth or of glory
I shall leave nothing behind me
(I think it, O God, enough)
But my name in the heart of a child.*

Padraic Pearse was a leading figure, perhaps the leading figure, in a group of Irish people who early in this century had an historic and poetic vision for the future of Ireland. His first biographer, Padraic Colum, defines it in this way: "All his programmes were for the recreation of a chivalry in Ireland."

Padraic Pearse was on the executive of the Gaelic League and editor of its weekly *An Claidheamh Solais* (the Sword of Light). Like many Irish patriots, he was partly English by descent: his father, an Englishman living in Ireland, had been brought up as a Protestant. His deep Catholi-

cism he had from his mother; he did not marry, but shared his home with her, with his brother William — another name the Irish remember — and his two sisters.

He taught himself the old Gaelic language. He believed that the last values of Irish civilisation, going back to the age of heroes, had best been preserved by the Irish peasantry in their poverty; he mastered the language by spending long periods in a cottage he owned in one of the poorest parts of West Connacht.

In 1908 he decided it would be more important to be an educator than an editor; he retired from the Gaelic League's journal, and founded two schools near Dublin, St Enda's for boys and St Ita's for girls. They were then the only lay Catholic schools in Ireland. We can best understand his underlying philosophy through what he wrote about education.

"All the problems with which we strive were long ago solved by our ancestors, only their solutions have been forgotten... for my part I take off my hat to the old Irish... their very names for 'education' and 'teacher' and 'pupil' show that they had gripped the heart of the problem. The word for 'education' among the old Gael was the same as the word for 'fostering'; the teacher was a 'fosterer' and the pupil was a 'foster-child'."

"Now to 'foster' is exactly the function of a teacher: not primarily to 'lead up', to 'guide', to 'conduct through a course of studies' and still less to 'indoctrinate', to 'inform', to 'prepare for exams', but primarily to 'foster' the elements of character already present... One does not want to drill all one's pupils into so many regulation little soldiers or so many stodgy little citizens, though this is apparently the aim of the most cried-up of modern systems... The true teacher will recognise in each of his pupils an individual human soul.

distinct and different from every other human soul that has ever been fashioned by God."

Such were the principles of his liberal combination of religious faith, romantic antiquarianism and Irish nationalism. What did he do with this saintly poet? We shot him. He died in Dublin Castle after the Easter Rising of 1916, along with Thomas MacDonagh, his brother William Pearse, and some 17 others.

These are the Irishmen of whom William Butler Yeats wrote:

*Our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child*

One cannot even blame the English for shooting Padraic Pearse.

William
Rees-Mogg

Easter in 1916 came late in April, only a couple of months before the Battle of the Somme. An army which was about to lose 90,000 of its own men in one battle could hardly be expected to spare 20 Irish rebels taken in arms, even if three of them were good poets.

The only solid reason of state for sparing them would have been the public relations cost in the United States, which had not yet entered the war. They were not spared.

Why did Padraic Pearse think it right to join the Irish Volunteers — precursors of the Irish Republican Army — and attempt an uprising against overwhelming British power in the middle of the First World War? Partly because he was a poet; his assessment of the prospects of a successful rebellion was not that of a practical military man. The parallel

is Byron's death at Missolonghi; Greece like Ireland was to win her freedom within a few years.

The early Irish stories which Padraic Pearse knew and taught are full of noble sacrifices, forlorn hopes and the deaths of heroes. An Irish poet of the reign of Queen Elizabeth had written, in Padraic Pearse's own translation:

*Or a barque's crew that a sea hath
whelmed,
Or a band sentenced to death,
Or thralls in Galt's fetters
Irish under outlanders!*

He thought "Irish under outlanders" as intolerable as Byron thought Greeks under Ottoman rule, or the English of 1914 thought Europe under the Prussian Empire. He accepted the loss of his life as a price necessary for national liberty. In any other context but the Anglo-Irish, the English tradition would have honoured such a man.

When one looks at the consequences of his death, one can see an almost immediate vindication, including one chance but very important side-effect, and a longer-term tragedy. The side-effect may, strangely enough, have ensured British victory in the First World War. David Lloyd George was about to go to Russia with Lord Kitchener on a munitions supply mission. Lloyd George was diverted to Ireland; the cruiser *Hampshire*, on which he would otherwise have been travelling, struck a mine and virtually everyone, including Kitchener, was drowned. Without Lloyd George as Prime Minister in 1917, the war might well have been lost.

For Ireland, the Easter Rising and its repression destroyed support for the moderate pro-British leadership of the nationalists; it led to full independence of the South after 1921, and to the creation of the modern Republic. Padraic Pearse is, in this

sense, the decisive martyr of Irish independence. The longer tragedy is equally apparent. Padraic Pearse gave false respectability to "the armed struggle". His "Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood" is the ideological ancestor of Sinn Féin-IRA.

The IRA has used methods of terrorism which he did not — he fought an open battle against superiors. The IRA attempted to coerce the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland. Padraic Pearse fought to bring to an end the coercion by Britain of the Catholic majority in Southern Ireland.

The decision to execute him, however understandable in the circumstances of 1916, widened the breach of alienation between Ireland and England which the peace process is trying to close, but with such difficulty.

Yet the greatest tragedy is perhaps that the independent Ireland that emerged was not the land of the Gaelic League's vision, and is becoming less so by the year. The chivalrous values that Padraic Pearse fought for were those of an ancient Catholic peasant land of myth. Those values have just continued to influence Ireland, as is evident in the continuing hold of the Catholic Church, but the divorce referendum shows that even that is now in decline.

The Gaelic League looked back to the Celtic culture of the time of St Patrick. The Ireland they wished would not be an autonomous West Britain but a resurgent Gaelic nationality. "The Ireland they got was not, indeed, 'an autonomous West Britain' but it was not a 'resurgent Gaelic nationality' either. Perhaps Padraic Pearse knew that his romantic vision was not attainable:

*I turned my back
On the dream I had shaped,
And to this road before me
My face I turned.
I set my face
To the road here before me,
To the work that I see,
To the death that I shall meet.*

Blessings of a bleak midwinter

Magnus Linklater in the North of Scotland relearns some basic lessons about dealing with ice and snow

There is a particular kind of voice they use on the radio for bad weather news. It drops by a doom-laden semitone as the statistics of snow-bound Britain are read out: 4,000 homes still cut off... emergency measures... workers struggling to restore electricity. There is a hint of suffering beyond the imagination. They make it sound like Sarajevo.

Since I am sending this column from the ice hell that northern Scotland I would naturally like to embellish the picture to describe the flickering candlelight by which I write, the heroism of my wife as she struggles through the snow for our supplies of penicillin and ointments, the remarkable ingenuity of my son who has rigged up makeshift generator to power the laptop computer while my daughter melts snow to dilute what may be the last malt whisky I shall sip for many a dark day.

It is not quite like that, although we are on the northern tip of Britain, about to embark for Orkney across a leaden sea. We have, it is true, had the experience of shovelling snow-slewed cars out of roadside drifts, applying boiling water to frozen windscreens, and driving 300 miles along single-tracked dual carriageways said to be negotiable only "with extreme caution". We have nursed freezing fingers and learnt the true meaning of "the wind-chill factor", when a gentle breeze on an open hillside acquires a cutting edge like razor wire. But we have also witnessed scenes of breathtaking beauty: snow-wrapped hills bathed in the pink light of morning; a pelmet of icicles beside the road, catching the light of the evening sun; the dazzling white of a winter cliff, fading into a grey sea.

As for the traditional "road chaos", I regret to report that I have been unable to locate it. Far from Britain's snowploughs and gritters being "caught on the hop" as most stories have assumed, in Scotland at least they have kept a remarkable number of roads open and reasonably sanded. The speed of travel, not



The milk and the mail got through yesterday in parts of snow-bound Britain, thanks to deliveries by sledge

surprisingly, has been halved, and overtaking is such a hazardous business that no one attempts it. But I saw no abandoned cars, overturned lorries or ashen-faced AA men talking of "nightmare conditions". I can, however, say that there is a strange excitement about embarking on a road where no plough has yet ventured, and where only a few tyre marks show that you are a part of an intrepid elite, that you rapidly acquire a sixth sense about icy stretches and that controlling a wheelpin is actually rather exhilarating. Shakespeare was on to something when he wrote about "wondrous strange snow".

The British like to make a drama out of the weather; indeed, Shakespeare may well be responsible for that. But did we always exaggerate its effects as we do today? I remember — at least I think I do — the ice-bound winters of my childhood, in which snow chains on cars were a regular part of life, and you never travelled anywhere without a spade and a sack of sand in the boot. I don't recall snow being headline news then, but perhaps I didn't read the newspapers.

Certainly, in previous ages, deep snow was a routine part of life. Robert Burns describes a journey north to Blair Atholl in Perthshire, through drifts 7ft deep. In a horse-

drawn carriage and over rutted tracks, it must have been truly a hellish journey, but the poet merely alludes to the weather in a throwaway line.

All we are experiencing now is something called winter, a season that used to happen regularly, but which we have tended to forget about. A decade or more of mild weather has cocooned us against the reality of sheet-ice and drifting snow. As a result, we have forgotten some basic lessons, instincts even, about dealing with cold weather.

In Peter Hoeg's bestselling novel, *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow*, the heroine, a native of Greenland, can

identify 18 different kinds of snow and their characteristics. Her intimate knowledge of icy conditions, almost a genetic inheritance from her ancestors, gives her an extra dimension of intelligence and enables her to survive, while the villains of the story perish.

After reading about Miss Smilla, I recommend that British Rail recruits a native Greenlandic to help to advise on such matters as why the light and feathery *qanik* snow falls as it does, and the significance of the fact that its crystals acquire the shape of a coffin as they get colder. Never again will BR need to blame "the wrong kind of snow".

For the rest of us, it's a matter of acquiring, through bitter experience, some basic lessons about ice, snow, and temperatures of minus ten. Like, never take a Volvo downhill over packed snow. The car may be Swedish-built, but driving it without snow tyres is like piloting a pair of skis, only far more frightening. The best car on slippery surfaces is the absurdly shaped Citroën 2CV, whose big wheels and even weight distribution give it a better grip than heavier, more powerful cars. (NB, this is folk wisdom rather than expert information and should naturally be treated with caution.) If you are negotiating an icy hill, never touch the brakes when you have started to slide, just turn the steering wheel gently in the general direction of the skid — and pray.

Always think ahead about what you are wearing and why it's not going to be enough. When you are shopping, remind yourself that you may not be able to do so again for a week. Think seriously about candles. And remember that most things in the cold take longer. You tend to dress slowly and carefully, protecting the exposed bits. You walk delicately. You drive with circumspection. Life slows down when you think ahead.

Perhaps, after all, there is something to be said for the bleak midwinter.

Battle royal

THE PRINCESS ROYAL is kicking out over proposals for a new housing estate in her backyard. She has lodged a formal objection with her local council after hearing of plans for "an executive village" on the site of a 14th-century mill bordering her Gloucestershire home, Gatcombe Park.

A London-based property developer is planning to build 73 homes on the site of the mill, a former

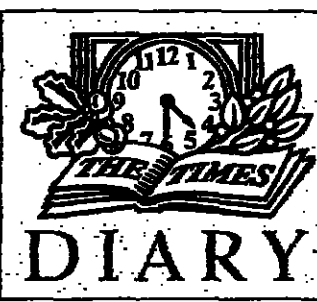


clothing factory in a picturesque pocket with its own lake. The Princess appears to be baring her formidable teeth in the saga, saying the development is too big and that it could pose security problems. She has appointed planning agents to argue her case.

The company behind the scheme, Hartley Property Developments, protests its innocence. "Without being rude, a lot of the comments from their side do seem to be a little empty," said a spokesman. "Nothing we would do on that site would be intended to prejudice their security."

It is not clear whether Hartley's marketing campaign would capitalise on the development's proximity to the Gatcombe household, if Stroud council's planners nodded the scheme through. But the Princess Royal is laying a good few water jumps in their path before they get to that stage.

While Tony and Cherie Blair soaked up the Australian sunshine this Christmas, I trust they thought fleetingly of the Labour MP for Pembroke, Nick Ainger. He was



among 200 brave souls who plunged into the icy sea for the 25th annual Boxing Day swim at Tenby in South Wales. He wore a sombrero and went in up to his neck.

Merry men

THE CAMBRIDGE University mafia has dominated the Cabinet in recent years, but a terrace house in Nottingham may come to be seen as the cradle of a future government. The Labour challengers at the general election to John Major, Brian Mawhinney and Douglas Hogg are a trio who plotted their political careers while sharing lodgings as students in the city. Jason Reece and Sean Harris, both teachers, have been selected to

take on the Prime Minister and the Agriculture Minister respectively. Lee Septon, a local government officer, is challenging the party chairman. "We were all involved in the Labour Club at university," says Reece. "But we didn't sit around the kitchen table plotting our careers on the back of an envelope like Michael Heseltine. It's a coincidence really."

■ Cops in New York who picked up an abandoned puppy in Central Park the other day are trying to find the emaciated creature a home by the new year. "She's as skinny as Kate Moss," says one officer. "So that's what we've called



Puppy love: Kate Moss

her. We need somebody who's prepared to live with Kate Moss."

Dumfrieze

A SCOTTISH castle which has taken all that the elements could throw at it over seven centuries might seem the place to sit out blizzards. But the Duke of Buccleuch, whose family was reportedly given Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfriesshire by Robert the Bruce in 1300, is having a disagreeable time.

There was a power cut yesterday forcing Europe's biggest landowner, wheel-chair-bound since a hunting accident, to huddle up to a coal fire by candlelight. "It's bitterly cold. Down to minus 14 degrees last night and not a lot of fun," quivered an ancient retainer who couldn't get through to His Grace, holed up as he was in another wing of the baronial hall where the phone lines were down. "We've not had any heating, but the coal fires are going now and it's making a wee difference."

Bag in hand

THE QUEEN behaved with the exemplary manners of a middle-class daughter on Christmas Day out-

side church at Sandringham. She didn't give two hoots for her appearance in front of the heaving throng of journalists, and pattered happily about with two handbags on her left arm.

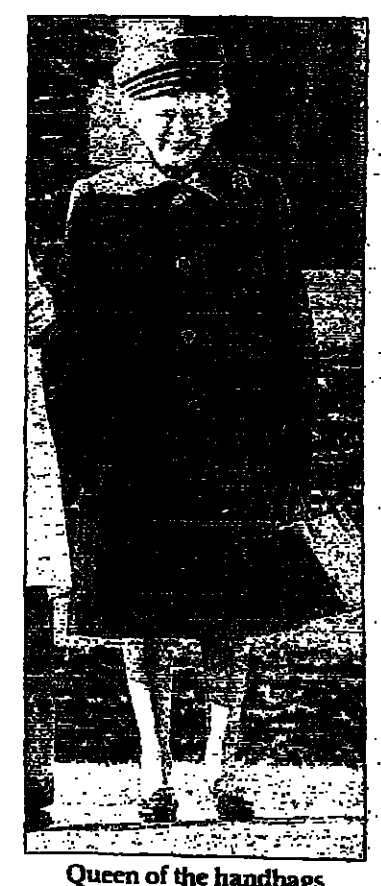
One bag was hers, while the other belonged to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, whose two hands were taken up with walking sticks after her recent hip operation. Buckingham Palace refuses to identify which bag belongs to which queen.

There were ungalant suggestions yesterday that the bag-carrying role might be a Princess of Wales-style attempt to exploit the sympathy of the lower classes — everybody would identify with a daughter who carried her trail mum's handbag.

A more plausible explanation comes from the etiquette expert and author of *Modern Manners*, Drusilla Beyfus: "Handbaggage is a very important part of royal iconography," she said.

"The Queen and her mother are very very rarely separated from their handbags. Ladies-in-waiting take parcels when Her Majesty goes shopping but they are never entrusted with handbags."

P-H-S



Queen of the handbags



CHRISTMAS CHILL

No seasonal cheer for Scottish Hydro-Electric

The Scots are a stoical breed. Used to weather that would make a southerner blanch, they have met the past few days' blizzards with remarkable equanimity. Even in the Shetland and Western Isles, where some have been without electricity for five days, there is a general determination to soldier on. But a new dimension has crept into public discussion north of the border. If anyone but God is to blame for the freezing conditions, it is the privatised electricity company, Scottish Hydro-Electric.

Yesterday Calum Macdonald, Labour MP for the Western Isles, blamed staff cuts at Scottish Hydro for the slowness of the company's response to power cuts. The company has replied by claiming that, of the 20,000 customers who lost their electricity on Christmas Day, 17,000 had it restored by the evening. The problem for the remaining 3,000 was not lack of engineers, but the impossibility of gaining access to remote areas cut off by snow.

Many of those who suffered power cuts had no other source of energy to rely upon. To have one's electricity cut off on Christmas Day, even if only for a day, is enough to test the festive spirit. The prospect of cold sandwiches in a freezing house instead of piping turkey in a warm kitchen would destroy most people's Christmas cheer. But until recently, they would have put the power failure down to bad luck and bad weather.

The difference now lies in the changed ownership of the utility companies. It is hard to feel public-spirited about a company in private hands. When the utility companies were publicly owned, their managers found it relatively easy to invoke a sense of civic duty about, for instance, saving water

during a drought. Now customers look at the huge salary increases of the directors, the burgeoning profits and the booming dividends and wonder why they should have to make a sacrifice to line the pockets of managers and shareholders. The moral authority that once was there has been lost.

Companies such as Scottish Hydro or Yorkshire Water bemoan their fate. They point out that this is the worst weather on the Shetland Isles for 40 years; and the summer in England was the driest since 1727. No supplier should be expected to achieve miracles. Moreover, their services have improved significantly since privatisation. They seem to win no credit, only blame.

Yet the managers of these utilities cannot escape blame for the way in which they are perceived by the public. Since being privatised, they have retained all the arrogance of nationalised industry bosses, while paying themselves the salaries of large private company managers. At Scottish Hydro, the highest-paid director before privatisation earned £50,000; within three years his salary had risen to £231,000, an increase of 362 per cent. At the same time, the company was asking its staff to accept pay cuts.

Private companies cannot expect their customers to suffer in silence. In most sectors, customers can simply move their business to a competitor. With monopoly suppliers, they have no choice, so the only outlet for their fury is vocal complaint. Utility directors can, however, assuage this anger. A combination of humility, contrition and, for the worst affected, financial compensation would warm the hearts of the most frozen islanders. Such an offer has yet to be made.

BONE-HEADED CHINA

Peking ignores Hong Kong's Democrats at its peril

Peking's allies in Hong Kong like to refer to 1996 as the "year of decision". They are right — for China as well as for Hong Kong's people. Hong Kong is a territory whose prosperity depends on an exceptionally high degree on confidence, an intangible quality which can evaporate overnight. With only 18 months to go before the colony is handed over, Peking's every move from now on will be warily scrutinised.

China has \$25 billion invested in Hong Kong, half its exports go through it, and the wealth produced by this community of only six million people is equivalent to a quarter of China's GDP. A wisely governed China would do everything possible to guard the secrets of Hong Kong's success.

Instead, towards Hong Kong as towards Taiwan, Peking persists in a needlessly and foolishly aggressive stance which has begun to worry even its close associates in Hong Kong. In September, it treated Hong Kong's first free legislative elections, in which Democrats won nearly half the seats, with hostility and contempt. So much for the pledge that "Hong Kong people will rule Hong Kong". In October, it made known its decision to emasculate Hong Kong's Bill of Rights in 1997 and to reinstate laws recently amended or scrapped in order to comply with the Bill's provisions on civil rights.

Today China is due to announce the membership of the 150-member Preparatory Committee, its chosen vehicle for handling the delicate business of the transition. To this committee, chaired by Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister, China has assigned decisions of the first importance. It is to advise on laws to be amended or repealed in 1997, including the Bill of Rights. It will appoint an electoral college of 400 Hong Kong citizens, which in turn will designate a Chief Executive to take over from the Governor, Chris Patten, in 1997. On the assumption that Peking unwisely persists in its decision to disband Hong Kong's

democratically elected legislative bodies in 1997, the Preparatory Committee will also appoint a provisional legislature to serve until new elections are held, under a more restricted franchise, at an unspecified date.

These considerations ought logically to have prompted China to appoint a genuinely representative body, trusted to do the best for Hong Kong. Instead, it has indicated that more than a third will be mainland Chinese — and that not one of Hong Kong's Democrats will be included. The point will not be lost on the thousands of civil servants, lawyers, teachers and members of the police force who are anxiously weighing their prospects under a new administration.

Businessmen will not wait until midnight on June 30, 1997 to decide whether they are confident that the rule of law will continue to be impartially upheld. Some are already moving the legal domicile of their companies elsewhere. Nervousness is not limited to Western companies. Earlier this month Larry Yung, son of a Chinese Vice-President and the chairman of Citic Peking's giant investment flagship in Hong Kong, stated bluntly and publicly that there was widespread ignorance in Peking about Hong Kong. China, he added, "could kill Hong Kong" by interfering directly, or by appointing an administration that "bent over backwards" to accommodate its wishes. Citing "real concern" about spreading corruption, he called on Hong Kong's people to "stand up" for the autonomy which China is formally pledged to respect.

Eighteen months from now, the world's cameras will be trained on Hong Kong. On present trends, they are likely to find its elected leaders thrown out of office, its laws in turmoil and its ablest citizens departed or poised for flight. China's wary old men refuse to listen to Hong Kong's voters, who have made the place what it is. But they should at least pay heed to Larry Yung: he speaks from the heart of the Chinese élite.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

For those born under the sign of Cancer, this should be one of the pleasantest seasons of the year. The particular predilections of this sign are well-catered for by what ought to be the real meaning of the Christmas spirit. For Cancerians are regarded as the most devoted family members in the zodiac spectrum. Their reputed virtues are sympathy, compassion and care for the feelings of others. Perhaps unfortunately for their own peace of mind, these traits are said to be offset by a tendency toward hypersensitivity and something of a preference for emotion over reason as a guide to action.

This picture seems to apply in many respects to the most prominent Cancerian in the land: the Princess of Wales. Her demonstrable concern for the suffering and troubles of other people — and her particular interest in children — are remarkably consistent with the traditional depiction of the Cancerian character. But what goes along with these personality traits is what astrologers describe as a deep need for emotional security and an unwillingness to forget slights: inclinations that could well influence the Princess's future as much as her desire to relieve others' pain.

Official astrological advice to Cancerians for 1996 is to concentrate on their long-term status and recognition, counsel which the Princess will probably need little encouragement to heed. It does not seem inconceivable that other well-known Cancerians such as

Nelson Mandela, Sir Edward Heath and Lord Owen will also be attending to their long-term public reputations.

But it is private life more than public stature that is thought to be the pivot of Cancerian existence, with the family being its primary focus. As this is, above all, the season of the family — the celebration of a holy one as well as the gathering of so many ordinary ones — it seems an appropriate time to appreciate the concerns associated with the sign of Cancer.

The urge to nurture and to give emotional support to others are traits that successful family life requires. Not that the reuniting of extended families at Christmas is always joyous. Readers may feel that, with its stresses and occasional tedium, a family Christmas has demanded all the Cancerian virtues that could be mustered.

The predictions for Cancer for the coming year may be of interest to many of the prominent Cancerians in public life. People born under this sign are promised greater professional responsibility and major transformations in their health. The Princess of Wales particularly may be intrigued to hear that there is likely to be a major change in her domestic sphere. But perhaps the aspect of Cancer that is most pertinent for everyone at this time of year was implied in the Christmas message of the Archbishop of Canterbury: that all births are miraculous and all families, however much at war, are sacred.

Embassies' role in export success

From Sir Ralph Robins,
Chairman of Rolls-Royce

Sir, At a time when the budgets and manpower of government departments are clearly under pressure, there is one important area of government activity which I very much hope will be exempted from reduction.

As one of the UK's largest exporters, with over 70 per cent of our turnover going to overseas markets, Rolls-Royce plc draws significantly on the services provided by the commercial departments of our embassies and high commissions and by the FCO and DTI in London. The quality of these services has improved in recent years with overseas posts showing a good understanding of commercial priorities. The support they provide often represents an important ingredient in the successful outcome of an export campaign.

As competition in world markets intensifies, foreign governments are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of maintaining effective representation for their exporters. To respond to this threat, it is essential that the FCO and DTI maintain their highly successful network of support and are not tempted in the interest of short-term economies to sacrifice the export performance of this country.

Yours faithfully,
RALPH ROBINS,
Chairman,
Rolls-Royce plc,
65 Buckingham Gate, SW1,
December 21.

Having a go

From Mr Francis Bennion

Sir, You report (December 12) that the Home Secretary has asked the police and the Crown Prosecution Service to treat any "have-a-go" hero more sympathetically. His interference is unconstitutional.

The British constitution entrusts the Attorney-General, not the Home Secretary, with the oversight of prosecution policy as guardian of the public interest. For very good reason, the exercise of the prosecutive power is constitutionally separate from the exercise of the executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

Some functionaries, notably the police, are regarded as part of the executive. Others, namely the courts, exercise the judicial power of the State. Prosecution policy stands apart. That is a vital safeguard, which Mr Howard should respect. It means that governments cannot decide who they wish to try or courts decide who shall appear before them.

The Attorney-General, in his capacity as guardian, is supposed to stand aloof from the executive. Why has he not stood out against the Home Secretary's presumptuousness?

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS BENNION,
54a Nicodemou Mylona Street,
Limassol 3095, Cyprus,
December 19.

HMSO sale

From Mr C. J. Rees

Sir, The proposal to privatise Her Majesty's Stationery Office (report, December 14) fills me with foreboding.

Fifteen years ago I would have welcomed it, for then HMSO was an inefficient and neolithic organisation, relieved only by the individual capabilities of people within it. In the intervening period its management has developed its potential to the extent that it is now by far the most efficient of the publishers I deal with.

Government departments are already free to seek tenders in the private sector for the production and distribution of their publications. That HMSO retains much of their business must speak volumes for the high standards it maintains.

I can see little advantage in selling HMSO into the private sector unless the Government wishes to see its publications reduced to the level of mediocrity which we all too frequently encounter in the large publishing houses. Multiplying the sources for government publications can only add to the problems that librarians and booksellers already encounter and which in turn lead to the citizen being unable to have access to the very information which government seeks to disseminate.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN REES,
John Rees Rare Books,
242 Merton Road, SW18.

Note of caution

From Mr Nigel A. Brassard

Sir, I think it is insulting, if understandable, that cashiers often subject bank notes to verification checks in front of me. Is it acceptable to ask them to verify the notes that they hand back as change?

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL A. BRASSARD,
46 Stanford Road, Kensington, W8,
December 22.

Business letters, page 25

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Support for courts-martial system

From Sir Frederick Lawton

Sir, Whatever qualifications the European Commission of Human Rights may have had for the opinion that the British court-martial system had denied Alex Findlay "a fair and public hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal" (report, December 19), experience of its working was not one of them.

I had experience of the court-martial system from 1940 when, as a subaltern, I was ordered to take summaries of evidence, until 1986, when I retired, having been a member of the Courts-Martial Appeal Court since 1961. I became convinced then, and still am, that those who are tried by courts martial get as fair trials as those who are tried by juries, sometimes fairer.

During those years I never had cause to think that the practice of general officers commanding convening courts martial and nominating their

members had led to injustice; nor do I remember anyone suggesting that it lacked the appearance of justice. Perhaps it might do if the convening officer had started his military career in the same regiment as an officer accused, whom he may have known. This is likely to be rare and can easily be avoided.

It is to be hoped that both the Government and Parliament will resist any implications which may arise from the judgment of the Court of Human Rights. Changes in the court-martial system may be necessary. If they are, they should be based on the experience of those who have to work it, not on the reasoning of continental lawyers that it cannot provide those accused with a fair trial when it does.

Yours truly,
FREDERICK LAWTON,
1 The Village,
Skelton, York,
December 20.

Calculating the standard of maths

From Sir Wilfred Cockcroft

Sir, Professor Emeritus Anthony Ralston (letter, December 13) quotes a sentence from my committee of inquiry's report concerning the use of calculators and its effect on computational ability. That sentence, out of context, naturally raises concerns among other correspondents (letters, December 18, 19, 21). They should know that it is part of a long section in the report concerning evidence we had received and arguments made to us about calculators and their use in schools.

The paragraph from which the sentence comes opens:

It is (also) clear that there is widespread public concern about the use of calculators by children who have not yet mastered the traditional pencil and paper methods of computation. It is feared that children who use calculators too early will not acquire fluency in computation nor confident recall of basic number facts. These fears are understandable and should not be ignored.

After a summary of research evidence available at the time of writing, the paragraph ends:

From all the studies the weight of evidence is strong that the use of calculators has not

produced any adverse effect on basic computational ability. We believe that this is important and should be better known both to teachers and to the public at large. Nevertheless, it remains incumbent upon those who teach mathematics to ensure that the development of appropriate skills of mental and written calculation is not neglected. Nor should a school overlook the need to make parents aware of its policy in regard to the use of calculators by pupils.

Yours faithfully,
WILFRED COCKCROFT,
The Old Rectory,
Warrington,
Banbury, Oxfordshire,
December 22.

From Dr Julia Matthews

Sir, Neither the use, misuse nor non-use of calculators is the main cause of poor maths standards.

An over-crowded curriculum for the early years results in less time allowed for assimilation and for sound foundations to be laid.

Yours etc,
JULIA MATTHEWS,
50 Sydney Road,
Bedleyheath, Kent,
December 21.

Tax on wheat

From the Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

Sir, On December 20 you published a letter from Mr R. B. Coles complaining that the European Commission had imposed a tax on wheat exports. I have been pressing for this and only wish it had been done sooner.

The normal state of affairs is that grain prices in the Community are kept well above world prices for the benefit of cereal farmers but to the disadvantage of consumers — who, of course, include other farmers. Taxpayers also lose because they have to subsidise the export of the Community's large surplus at the world price.

For once, the world price has risen above the intended producer price. Surely in this situation both the con-

sumer and the taxpayer should get some return for all the costs they normally bear, by ensuring that the market price is held below the world price. This is exactly what an export tax brings about. The tax is simply the mirror image of the subsidy that is paid in the normal case.

In effect Mr Coles is arguing that the cereals grower within the Community ought to get — and the consumer ought to pay — the Community's support price for cereals or the world price, whichever is the higher. I disagree: the first of these prices is quite high enough already.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS HOGG,
Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food,
Whitehall Place, SW1,
December 21.

NHS charges

From Dr Lionel Kreeger

Sir, I recently wrote to a general practitioner colleague after a consultation with one of his patients, requesting some details about her previous medical care. I received photocopies of relevant notes, with an invoice for £7.23 and a demand for settlement by return of post.

The general practitioner's practice manager assured me that this was now their standard procedure, and the British Medical Association confirmed that it has become an acceptable development.

After 46 years in medical practice, I find it distasteful. None of my 15 colleagues has had a similar experience.

Yours sincerely,
LIONEL KREEGER,
The Group-Analytic Practice,
88 Montague Mansions, W1,
December 20.

Lane discipline

From Mr Nitin A. Kibe

Sir, I disagree with Dr Aileen K. Adams (letter, December 16) about American drivers and lane discipline. In my experience they are notorious for not practising it but many live to tell the tale because speeds are almost absurdly low.

The interstate highways have a large safety buffer because of surplus capacity (local and temporary shortages in Los Angeles and at rush hours apart).

Drivers have been conditioned into over-compliance with posted limits at the cost of virtually every other rule for safe superhighway driving. They are taught that nobody is entitled to travel faster than the posted limit. Cases of their enforcing the limit by blocking others are common and widely tolerated by traffic police.

Americans typically "do the limit" in any lane and refuse to yield, setting up a rolling roadblock and forcing faster traffic to weave.

Perhaps things will change now that the 20-year-old 55mph limit has been abolished, however reversing

some of the bad driving habits which it spawned will take time.

Yours etc,
NITIN KIBE,
2007 Lorraine Avenue,
McLean, Virginia 22101,
December 18.

Road manners

From Mr S. W. G. Pettigrew

Sir, I recently returned from a "fly-drive" holiday in South Africa. I noticed their car drivers' pleasant acknowledgement to another's act of courtesy (such as pulling over to ease overtaking). This is customarily done by a double flash of the car hazard indicator.

In this season of goodwill to all perhaps we in this country should try it. Such an obvious act of old-world manners might even ameliorate the growing "motorway madness".

Yours faithfully,
SIMON PETTIGREW,
The Folly,
Folly Road, Lambourn, Berkshire,
December 18.

Mysteries of the Magi's star

From Mr Ian Ridpath

Sir, Andrew Bamji (letter, December 23) has successfully spotted the ambiguity in the Biblical phrase "we have seen his star in the east", attributed to the Wise Men. As Dr Bamji correctly notes, the Wise Men were in the east, probably somewhere in the vicinity of present-day Baghdad, while the star was in the west. With this information, we can begin to identify a possible celestial cause of the Star of Bethlehem with more certainty.

King Herod died shortly after an eclipse of the Moon, most likely the total eclipse in January in the year 1 BC, and Christ's birth would have preceded this. In June of 2 BC the two brightest planets, Venus and Jupiter, moved into line with each other in the astrologically symbolic constellation of Leo, the lion. As seen from the Middle East, Venus and Jupiter would have appeared as a single object of dazzling intensity in the western evening sky on the evening of June 17.

This explanation, first published some fifteen years ago in *Sky & Telescope* magazine, has curiously been overlooked by British astronomers, despite the fact that it would have been the most astounding celestial event of the era, one that no Wise Man worth his salt could have overlooked.

Yours faithfully,
IAN RIDPATH,
48 Otho Court, Brentford, Middlesex.

From Canon Michael Saward

Sir, In the annual agonising over the Bethlehem Star I cannot recall anyone mentioning the reason for the development of the legendary features as distinct from the essential heart of the matter.

According to the Bible, the pagan prophet Balaam had a vision, soon after the Exodus, in which "I look into the future and see the nation of Israel. A king, like a bright star, will arise in that nation. Like a comet he will come". After Christ's resurrection, the apostle John also had a vision in which the glorified Jesus calls himself "the bright star". Twenty years later, the early Christian martyr-bishop Ignatius of Antioch, writing of Christ's birth to a virgin, speaks of "an indescribably bright star, outshining sun, moon, and stars".

Since the nativity stories of Luke and Matthew never mention "a bright star", and no one else seems to have seen it, surely the key is to be found by looking for the "bright star" in, and not over, the manger.

The Magi's star, significant only to them, pointed to the true bright star who had been born in Bethlehem. Later-day legends, in cards and carols, have wrecked the real meaning and set us all looking in the wrong direction. Sadly, the churches have followed the same wild-star chase, failing to see that their endorsement of the legends has damaged the credibility of the whole nativity record.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SAWARD,
6 Amen Court, EC4.

Time was when . . .

From Mr Patrick Howarth

Sir, One of the problems of growing old is difficulty in understanding people deemed to be representative of our times.

A decade or so ago such a person was likely to live in a rural area called a neck of the woods, which was surrounded by parameters. Here he or she was much concerned with the nitty-gritty, particularly at the end of the day.

Now his or her successor seems to eat or hear phenomena called sound-bites, in settings said to be, basically, state of the art, while waiting for judgment to be conferred along something known as the bottom line.

Yours in bewilderment,
PATRICK HOWARTH,
Flat 2, Pencarrow,
The Avenue, Sherborne, Dorset.

Clerical collars

From the Reverend Father B. J. Eager

Sir, Clerical collars (letters, December 23) can be manufactured easily and cheaply from old washing-up liquid bottles. With the aid of reasonably sharp scissors they can be made to fit almost any size of neck or style of modern shirt.

I have worn one such home-made collar the wrong way round so that the name of the washing-up liquid was visible and either nobody noticed or they were too polite to mention it.

Yours sincerely,
BERNARD EAGER,
St Catherine of Siena Church,
Newton Road, Lorton, Warrington.

Mark II mankind

From Sir George Engle, QC

Sir, I think it was T. H. Huxley, the great Victorian comparative anatomist, who, when asked what changes he would make if redesigning the human frame (report, December 22), replied that he would move the mouth to the top of the head so that he could put his lunch in his top hat and eat it walking along.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE ENGLE,
32 Wood Lane, Highgate, N6,
December 22.

SOCIAL NEWS

Birthdays today

Air Commodore Molly Allott, former director, WRAF, 77; Mr W.A. Camps, former Master, Pembroke College, Cambridge, 85; Mr D.B. Carr, cricketer, 69; Miss Madeleine Craig, secretary, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 50; Mr T.W. Gould, VC, 81; Mr Max Hastings, Editor-elect, *Evening Standard*, 50; Mr Roy Hattersley, MP, 63; Professor P.E. Kelly, statistician, 45; Mr Nigel Kennedy, violinist, 39; Mr Martin Llewarch, chairman, Transport Development Group, 60; Mr Michael J.P. Marks, deputy chairman, Merrill Lynch, 54; Mr Michael Marland, educationist, 61; Mrs Frances Morrell, former leader, ILEA, 58; Sir Patrick O'Connor, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 81; Mrs Bridget Prentice, MP, 43; Mr Simon Raven, author and dramatist, 68; Mrs Joan Ruddock, MP, 52; Dame Maggie Smith, actress, 61; Mr Denzel Washington, actor, 41; the Right Rev W.J. Westwood, Bishop of Peterborough, 70; the Hon Geoffrey Wilson, former chairman, Delta Group, 60; the Marquess of Zetland, 53.

Appointments in the Forces

The Army
LIEUTENANT COLONEL J.W. Blair, RA CH D, to (UK) Arm Div, 29.12.95.
Retirements:
BRIGADIER T Longland, late R Anglian, 31.12.95; W.B. Stevens, late RA, 1.1.96.
COLONEL J.C.W. Williams, late RWF, 1.1.96; R.E. Potts, late RADC, 31.12.95.

Legal appointments

Mr Roger John Laugharne Thomas, QC, to be a Justice of the High Court, assigned to the Queen's Bench Division.
Mr Nicolas John Mitchell to be a Circuit Judge, assigned to the Midlands and Oxford Circuit.
Miss Caroline Sarah Raymond to be a Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate from January 22.
Retirement:
The Hon Mr Justice Gatehouse will retire as a Judge of the High Court (Queen's Bench Division) on January 10.

Latest wills

Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Conerton Selby, of Duncombe, Tower, Northamptonshire, the horseman and showjumper, left estate valued at £130,112 net.
Mr Timothy Oliver Parker, of London SW3, left estate valued at £9,264,929 net.
Mr Harold Ernest Lawrence Hilbert, of Chesham, Surrey, left estate valued at £4,059,661 net.
Cecilie Elisabeth Fearnley Longdon, of Burghclere, Hampshire, left estate valued at £3,234,101 net.

Lord Borrie

The life barony conferred upon Sir Gordon Johnson Borrie, QC, has been granted by the name, style and title of Baron Borrie, of Abbot Morton in the County of Hereford and Worcester.

Church in Wales

Dioecesis of St Asaph
The Rev Malcolm Squires, currently Vicar of Miffield in the Diocese of Wakefield, to be Rector of the Rectorial Benefice of Wretham in the Diocese of St Asaph.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Alexander Keith Johnston, geographer, Penicuik, 1804; Samuel Phillips, journalist, 1814; Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th American President, 1913-21, Staunton, Virginia, 1856; Pio Barilla y Nesi, novelist, San Sebastian, Spain, 1872; Sir Arthur Eddington, astronomer, Kendal, Cumbria, 1882.

DEATHS: St Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church, 1622; Queen Mary II, reigned with King William III 1689-94, London, 1694; Pierre Bayle, philosopher, 1706; Thomas Bingham Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay, poet, historian and statesman, London, 1859; George Gissing, novelist, St-Jean de Luz, France, 1903; Maurice Ravel, composer, Paris, 1937; Theodore Dreiser, novelist, Hollywood, 1945; Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy 1900-46, Egypt, 1947; Jack Lovelock, surgeon, Olympic 1500m gold medalist 1936, killed in an accident, New York, 1948; Paul Hindemith, composer, Frankfurt am Main, 1963.
The Tay Bridge collapsed into the river below, 1879.
The first weather reports relayed by wireless telegraphy were published in London, 1904.

University news

Manchester
Appointments to Chairs
Henry Charles Kitchener, at present Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist with a Special Interest in Oncology to the Aberdeen Royal Hospital and Honorary Senior Lecturer in Gynaecological Oncology in the University of Aberdeen, to be Professor of Gynaecological Oncology, from April 1, 1996.
Ian James Stratford, at present Head of Experimental Oncology at the MRC Radio-biology Unit, Chilton, Didcot, to be Professor of Pharmacy in the Department of Pharmacy, from January 1, 1996.
Michael James Dixon, at present Reader in Dental Genetics in the School of Biological Sciences and the Department of Dental Medicine and Surgery, to be Professor of Dental Genetics (in the same departments), from Jan 1, 1996.
Kevin Donald O'Brien, at present Senior Lecturer in

Orthodontics at the University, to be Professor of Orthodontics in the Department of Dental Medicine and Surgery, from January 1, 1996.
Martin James Humphries to be Wellcome Trust Professorial Research Fellow in Biochemistry from a date to be arranged.
William Duncan to be Honorary Professor of Radiation Oncology in the Department of Oncology from September 1, 1995 to August 31, 1998.
Appointments
Wolke Gertrude Brockhaus to be Lecturer in German Linguistics in the Department of German Language and Literature.
Stuart Campbell to be Lecturer in Archaeology.
Duncan Howard Carter to be Lecturer in Dental Sciences (in lieu of Experimental Officer) in the Department of Dental Medicine and Surgery.
Jacqueline Chianian to be Lecturer in Cardiovascular Medicine (in succession to Research Associate in the Department of Medicine).



A helper supervises children playing at the community enterprise centre on the Austin Estate, Derby

Making up for the planners' mistakes

By JOHN YOUNG

IN THE middle of the sprawling Austin Estate, on the southern fringes of Derby, is a small and not readily explainable example of how planners go wrong. The Browning Circle is a rotunda of a dozen or so shops intended for the convenience of residents who might have been expected to patronise them regularly; instead for some reason they were shunned and three quarters of them are empty and boarded up.

In these unpromising surroundings a new "community enterprise centre" has been established, and in a bare nine months has made impressive strides.

A former Co-op store, empty for 17 years, has been renovated and redecorated to a bright, welcoming "surgery" where local people can come for advice on housing problems, financial difficulties, welfare rights and even disputes with their neighbours.

The person largely responsible for getting the project off the ground is Carl Taylor, a former railwayman, who gained experience in social work when he became involved in a number of church projects and who works part-time for the Third Wave centre, a similar but longer established scheme in an inner area of the city, which has provided support and advice.

His genesis was a successful bid by Derby City Council for government renovation funds, which led to the formation



Suzanne Cliff, the project's development officer

of a residents' group limited to come up with a plan for tackling the estate's problems.

On the surface the area does not appear to be deprived, consisting mainly of semi-detached and terraced housing which, at the insistence of the former owner who gave the land to the council and after whom the estate is named, is linked by quiet, winding roads bordered by lawns and hedges. It could be almost anywhere in suburbia.

But a survey unearthed familiar complaints such as unemployment, crime and fear of crime, particularly among the elderly; low incomes; a lack of training and

education opportunities; and a lack of facilities for young people. To those Mr Taylor adds his own observation that two generations of excessive local authority paternalism has bred a dependency culture, in which people have become unused to taking initiatives to improve their own lives.

The first modest steps to engage people in running more of their own affairs include the establishment of five new neighbourhood watches, the reopening of a youth club, a garden tool hire service to encourage people to maintain and improve their surroundings, a "befriending" service for old people and the provision of after-school child care services for working mothers. The centre itself also includes a rapidly growing lending library.

More ambitious plans include training and education, including vocational courses in business management and information technology, to build up people's confidence and help them into employment. The centre is hoping to negotiate a long lease on a spacious and well-equipped nearby building owned by a hospital trust but now considered surplus to needs.

The obvious dynamism of the project has attracted funding from both the city council and the Government, including the salary of a full-time development worker, Suzanne Cliff. More than 40 people attended the first annual general meeting on an



estate where only a few months ago, according to Mr Taylor, it would have been difficult to attract even four or five people to a public meeting.

"Already we can see a dramatic change in people's readiness to speak out, contribute ideas and communicate," he says. "They are shedding their apathy and starting to see that things can change."

"There is a buzz," Mrs Cliff adds. "People who are disadvantaged have got used to waiting for something to happen, but they come here and see that things can be made to happen. I like to think we are bridging the gap between people and authority. A lot of people are afraid of authority and we hope they can learn to lose that fear."

The Austin Community Enterprise Advice Centre is one of the winners of the 1995 Community Enterprise Awards, organised by Business in the Community and sponsored by The Times and Touche Ross.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr D.J. Bowdley and Miss S.E. Herd
The engagement is announced between David, elder son of Mr John Bowdley, of New York, and the Hon Mrs Mervyn Healy, of West Fenton, East Lothian, and Sally, daughter of Mr and Mrs Charles Herd, of Gullane, East Lothian.

Mr S.A. Brydon and Miss J.M. Prosser
The engagement is announced between Simon Guy Valdimir, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Hill, of Fribury-on-the-Wreake, Leicestershire, and Joanna, daughter of the Hon Lord and Lady Prosser, also of Edinburgh.

Mr S.J. Davies and Miss M.C. Loder
The engagement is announced between Stephen John, son of Mr and Mrs T. Davies, of Llanelli, Dyfed, and Mary Charlotte, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs R. Loder, of Lower Beeding, West Sussex.

Mr S.G.V. Hill and Miss H.V. Southall
The engagement is announced between Simon Guy Valdimir, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Hill, of Fribury-on-the-Wreake, Leicestershire, and Helen Valerie, daughter of Mr and Mrs Walter Southall, of Prestwich, Manchester.

Mr T. Fritzlaff and Miss L. Turner
The engagement is announced between Tony, son of Mr and Mrs Robert Fritzlaff, of Melbourne, Australia, and Lucy, daughter of Mr Gavin Turner, of Bath, and Mrs Jane Knight of London.

Mr G.N. McBain and Miss S.E. Benyon
The engagement is announced between Neville, elder son of Mr and Mrs George McBain, of Lower Woodshaw Farm, Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, and Susan, youngest daughter of Mr William and Lady Benyon, of Englefield House, Englefield, Berkshire.

Mr H.R. Rivington and Miss J.K. Jones
The engagement is announced between Hugh, younger son of Mr Christopher Rivington and the late Mrs Irene Anne Rivington, of Hincham, Suffolk, and Julia, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Jensen, of Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire.

Mr D.J. Zwill and Miss G.J. Robertson
The engagement is announced between Donald, son of Mr and Mrs Morison Zwill, of Falkirk, Scotland, and Gail, daughter of the late Jim Robertson and of Mrs Frances Robertson, of Toronto, Canada.

Ancient city reveals more of its secrets

By NORMAN HAMMOND, ARCHAEOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

THE international campaign to shed new light on ancient Aksum, once called "the last of the great civilisations of antiquity to be revealed to modern knowledge", has yielded striking results. Tombs and monuments have been excavated both within the city of Aksum itself, in the northern highlands of Ethiopia, and on the hills outside, indicating a larger ceremonial area than initially thought.

In addition, remains of *tef*, the staple cereal of modern Ethiopia, have been found for the first time in an ancient context, suggesting that it could have already been important nearly 2,000 years ago.

Based on the Tigre plateau north of the headwaters of the Blue Nile, 350 miles from Addis Ababa, the Aksumite kingdom linked South Arabia and Somalia with Nubia and the southern frontiers of Roman Egypt. The kingdom flourished for most of the first millennium AD, and imports from the Roman Empire have been among the recent finds.

The impressive granite stelae, monoliths up to 100ft high and elaborately carved, were first recorded by a German expedition in 1906, but further work only took place after the Second World War, when the British Institute in East Africa began several years of excavation. Dr David Phillipson, of Cambridge University, is continuing the tradition: his team left in October for their third season.

"We have already investigated major tombs in the centre, and now we will continue work in the domestic occupation area, with an emphasis on recovering information about the food-producing

economy of ancient Aksum," Dr Phillipson said. An Italo-American project has already successfully recovered seeds of *tef* from layers dated to AD 400-700, as well as wheat and barley.

"*Tef* is one of the principal crops in Ethiopia today, used for *injera*, the pancake-like bread eaten at every meal," Professor Julie Hansen, of Boston University, said. "Despite its intensive use now, we know very little about where and when it was first domesticated."

"The grains are minute, only about a millimetre across, and there are many wild types of it. These grains provide evidence for the first evidence for the ancient cultivation of this important crop."

The *tef* was found during excavations on the hill of Bieta Giyorgis, where tombs, stone stelae, and occupation areas have been found by Professors Kathryn Bard and Rodolfo Batovici.

Dr Phillipson's project will explore the thesis that Aksum first prospered by exploiting such indigenous resources; before taking control of gold and ivory sources and becoming one of the great trading centres of the ancient world.

The British team will also continue to explore the great platform underlying the existing Cathedral of Maryam Tsion: although much of the church was rebuilt after destruction in 1535, they have found that part of the older building was incorporated into the new structure. The podium on which it stands dates back to the Aksumite period, but what sort of building stood on it is not yet known.

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The Lord God has given me the tongue of one who has been instructed in console the weary with a timely word; he made my hearing sharp every morning that I might listen. (Job 33: 18)

BIRTHS

CARLES - On 20th December 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Carles, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
CARTER - On December 22nd 1995, to Louise and David, a son, James Francis Philip.
CLARK - On 23rd December 1995, to Alison and David, a son, James Francis Philip.
de Vries - On December 22nd 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. de Vries, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
GAV - On December 23rd, 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Gav, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
GUNTER - On December 23rd, 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Gunter, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
LOUGHEED - On December 23rd, 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Lougheed, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
RHODES - On 23rd December 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Rhodes, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
VOLLER - On Christmas Eve at East Surrey Hospital, to Joanna (nee Morgan) and Alan, a daughter, Lucy Alice Clara.

DEATHS

BASLEY - Maurice Charles, on Christmas Eve, aged 87, at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, after a five week illness having no word of complaint. Devoted husband of the late Sally (nee King), bornman, and sportsman of the old school and a well known cricketer. Buried at St Mary's, Cambridge, on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 11.45 am, following a service at the King's Head, 151st St, Cambridge CB1 6HS. Tel: 01223 891236.

DEATHS

BEADLE - On December 27th in home, aged 39 years. Beloved brother of Jo. Loving uncle to Richard and James. Charles was a member of the Church of the Annunciation, Bryanston Street, London. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
BERNARD - On December 22nd 1995, John aged 67 years. Beloved husband of Elizabeth. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
CLARK - On 23rd December 1995, to Alison and David, a son, James Francis Philip.
de Vries - On December 22nd 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. de Vries, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
GAV - On December 23rd, 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Gav, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
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RHODES - On 23rd December 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Rhodes, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
VOLLER - On Christmas Eve at East Surrey Hospital, to Joanna (nee Morgan) and Alan, a daughter, Lucy Alice Clara.

DEATHS

BUTCHER - Thomas Edmund. Peacefully on Christmas Eve 1995, beloved husband of the late Mrs Audrey. Deeply loved by his two daughters Alison and Peter. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
CATLOW - Anthony L. D. DSC. Royal Navy (retired). Beloved husband of Jane. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
DUNCAN - Augustus Mildred. Peacefully on Christmas Eve 1995, beloved wife of the late Mr. Augustus. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
EVANS - Violet. On December 26th, 1995, peacefully at Putney Hospital. Loving mother of Peter. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
FITZALAN HOWARD - Margaret. Beloved wife of Michael and devoted mother and grandmother. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
GUNTER - On December 23rd, 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Gunter, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
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RHODES - On 23rd December 1995, to the wife of Mr and Mrs J. Rhodes, a daughter, Rebecca Louise, a sister for Alexander and Matthew.
VOLLER - On Christmas Eve at East Surrey Hospital, to Joanna (nee Morgan) and Alan, a daughter, Lucy Alice Clara.

DEATHS

GLOVER - Michael Gordon. On December 21st, dearly loved by all his family. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
HEWLEY - Captain John. On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
KIRCHNER - Isobel. On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
LEACH - On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
MACINTOSH - L.I. On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
ROBERTS - Norman. On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
STEWART - On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
WILSON - On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.

DEATHS

HAIRNES - Beryl. On 21st December 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
JACKSON-HOULSTON - On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
JOLIFFE - On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
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WALCROFT - On December 21st, 1995, peacefully at home. Buried on Thursday, January 4th, 1996, at 12 noon followed by a service at St. Mary's Church, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1, by 10 am. Enquiries (0171) 387 4078.
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DEATHS

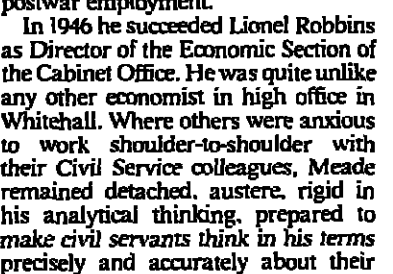
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WILSON - On December 2

PROFESSOR JAMES MEADE

When war came he was still in Geneva. By early in 1940 the financing of the war had come to present a problem only to be solved — as Keynes



Over the next ten years, nonetheless, he gradually became the keystone of the Cambridge teaching. His lucid lectures on economic principles formed the intellectual foundation of a generation of Cambridge undergraduates. He made Cambridge teaching more pre-

Meade was also a practical man, a skilled carpenter and cabinet maker, and the possessor of a fine baritone singing voice. He is survived by his wife Margaret, whom he married in 1933, one son and three daughters.

SIR COLVILLE DEVERELL

Deverell spent the next seven years as a district officer before moving to Nairobi in 1938 as clerk to the colony's executive and legislative councils. Commissioned into the Army on the outbreak of the Second World War, he was posted to the civil affairs



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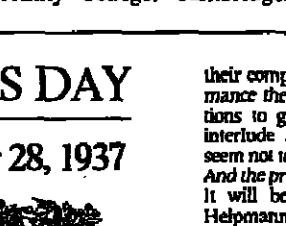
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DAVID NICKERSON

but it appears as one of the lo-
magical, and least affected produ-
play that the stage has seen for many



He lived during the week in Notting Hill, with a series of flat-coated black retrievers, and within walking distance of his local pub, the Windsor Castle. He had more than a touch of the Mr Toad about him, favouring pinstripes — nearer the weekend tweeds — and yellow pullovers. He is survived by his wife Sara, two sons and a daughter.

but it appears as one of the loveliest, most magical, and least affected productions of the play that the stage has seen for many years. There

may be delighted by the vivacity of
 andson's Bottom, and the special drol
 Frederick Bennett's Snug. When the

unconformity with European stations, Radio-
Normandie were acting contrary to the British
objection to commercial broadcasting.

BA still does the business

CLOSE ON the heels of a recent report showing that British holidaymakers get the best and the cheapest air fares in Europe comes a survey by American Express which concludes that business-class air fares from Britain are the lowest in Europe.

A trip of 500 miles from London costs on average 44p a mile compared with 66p a mile from Paris and 77p a mile from Geneva. The figures should silence some of those who regularly moan about the high price of flying around Europe on business.

But there are some worrying trends developing. While



The Travel Business
HARVEY ELLIOTT

business air fares generally have risen on average by about 3 per cent during 1995, Britain's airlines have put prices up by 6 per cent.

The second cheapest country in which to buy a business class ticket is Spain, where it costs 51p a mile for an average 500-mile journey. This is of concern to British Airways, which remains convinced that Iberia, the Spanish carrier, is only able to compete because it receives prohibited handouts from the Spanish Government which the European Union appears to sanction.

Sir Colin Marshall, who still has four days to run as BA's chairman and chief executive, was upset last week to hear that the EU had given the go-ahead for a £400 million cash injection for Iberia. He was particularly worried that the company had found a formula which enabled it to claim that it was not receiving state aid.

But, despite so much state cash now propping up its rivals, BA is still the world's most profitable airline, even when its business-class fares are comparatively cheap. So relax, Sir Colin. Let Iberia have its money. You and the new management team can still beat them.

Where you'll holiday in 1996

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

WINTER holidays, especially to America, are proving increasingly popular despite a big fall in the number of summer packages being taken (see below), according to Britain's biggest travel agency chain.

Between now and the end of March, more than 2.6 million people will travel on package holidays in search of either sun or snow—an increase of 7 per cent on last season, Lunn Poly says in its annual survey.

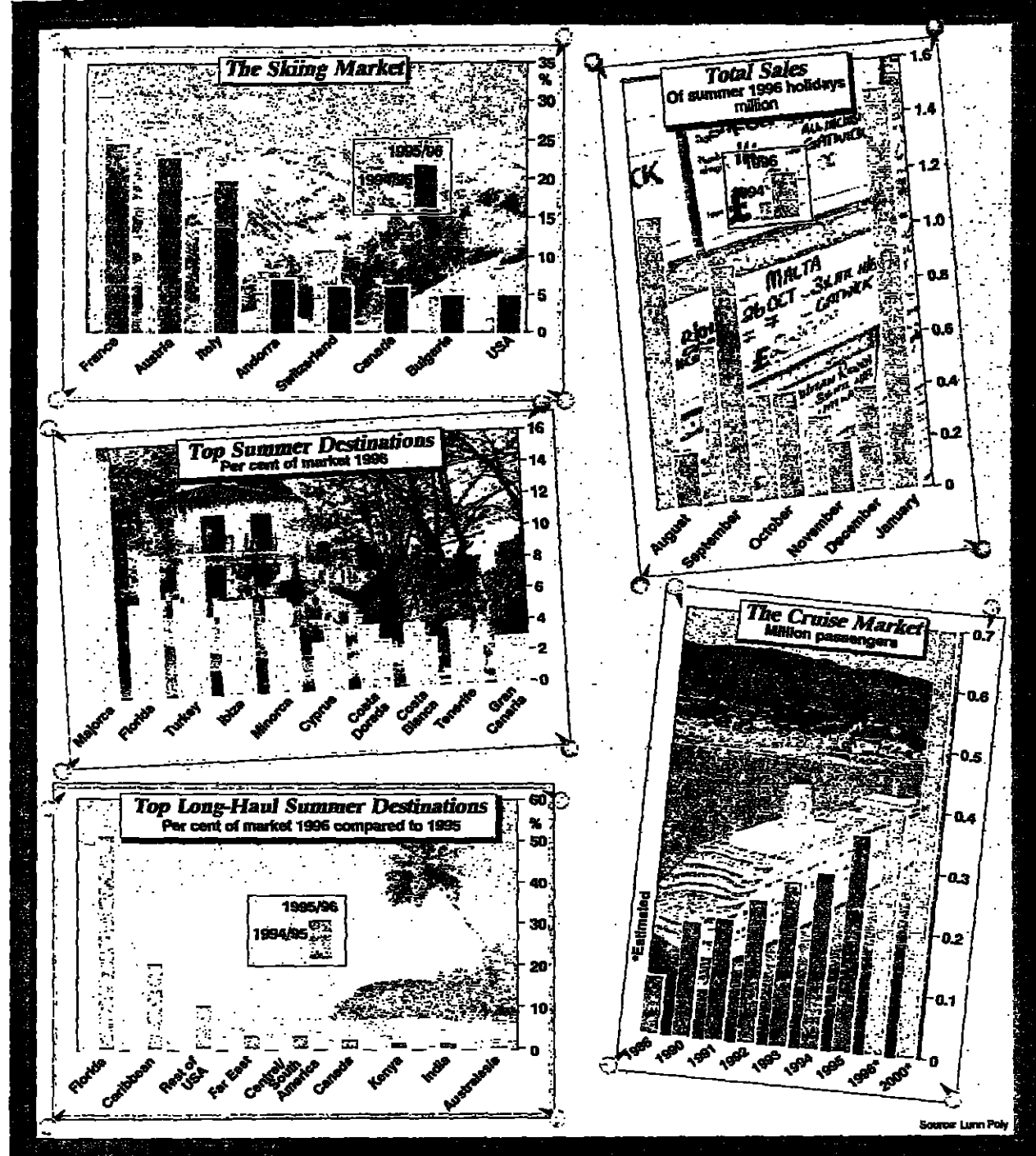
While sales for summer package holidays are stuck in the doldrums, bookings for this winter are booming. America has already grabbed a 10 per cent share of the market compared with 7 per cent at the same time last year. Italy has seen the strongest growth in ski bookings, mainly at the expense of Austria which has now slipped into second place behind France. Italy is now a close third in popularity with a 20 per cent market-share.

Cruising is also proving an increasingly attractive holiday option. About 350,000 people will have taken a cruise holiday this year compared with 283,000 in 1994 and just 100,000 ten years ago. Over the next four years the numbers are expected to double again, convincing the big tour operators such as Thomson and Airtours to operate their own cruise ships. Bookings are already well beyond their expectations.

The other good news for the travel industry is in the number of short breaks being chosen by holidaymakers who appear no longer to be prepared to take a traditional two-week seaside holiday in a foreign resort.

In all 2.7 million people will have taken a short-break holiday this year with long-haul destinations—especially New York—proving particularly popular.

Overall, however, during 1995 the travel industry suffered a static year and no increase in sales. Many tour operators had convinced themselves that the growth of about 12 per cent, to which they had become accustomed since the end of the Gulf War, would continue and they therefore put on additional



capacity which they were eventually forced to sell at a discount. The long hot summer also persuaded many late bookers not to bother going abroad.

Spain remained the most popular destination, attracting 42 per cent of the total market in package holidays. Turkey, however, was the success story of the year

leaping from sixth to third in the top ten list of most popular countries.

Long-haul holidays booked through travel agents accounted for 10 per cent of all bookings, slightly up on the previous year's figures. The upturn was largely due to Florida's revival which attracted half the long-haul holidaymakers.

Skiing holidays appear to be continuing their slide, with agents reporting a drop of about 10 per cent on last year's sales. Many skiers book late, however, when they see what snow conditions are likely to be. Two years ago Italy had only 15 per cent of the market, but this has dramatically changed. Italian resorts are catching up fast on those in the

two most popular countries, France and Austria.

Although it is too early to judge which destinations will prove most popular for 1996, early indications show that America and Turkey are increasing their share of the market. Spain's dominance, so far, appears to have been eroded, possibly because of an increase in hotel prices.

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Book now, pay later

TRAVEL AGENTS and tour operators across Britain are anxiously watching for the first signs of a post-Christmas surge in holiday bookings.

Without at least an indication that families are prepared to commit themselves to a holiday in the sun in 1996, the industry may be forced to accept that Britain has turned its back on the traditional package holiday.

So far bookings are down by at least 25 per cent compared with Christmas last year, and even the wildest optimists are convinced that the final number of package holidays taken next year will be at least 10 per cent fewer than this. The few days between Christmas and the new year are regarded as crucial in establishing a pattern for the future.

Much will depend on the success of a range of new measures designed to stimulate early bookings.

Thomson, for example, has introduced a scheme known as "fluid pricing" which came into effect yesterday. This turns on its head the traditional idea of holidays coming down in price the nearer to the departure date. Now, more than a million holidays will be heavily discounted immediately they go on sale and gradually increase in price if demand grows.

Charles Newbold, Thomson's managing director, said that late discounts were introduced to top up the last few seats on a flight. "Over the past few years things have got out of hand. Unless we turn the tide now, I fear that within a few years there will be no early booking market left," he told travel agents in a letter.

Lunn Poly is offering 10 per cent, free insurance or a "buy now, pay before you fly" instalment scheme. Other tour

operators and travel agencies are also cutting prices and offering a range of special offers to win early bookers. The indications so far, however, are not good.

In an effort to convince holidaymakers to hurry, agencies and operators say that because 1.5 million holidays have been withdrawn from the market there will inevitably be a shortage.

"Late bargains will be harder to come by," Jamie Moffat, the managing director of A. T. Mays, said. "We recommend holidaymakers to book now and take advantage of the discounts on offer."

Kevin Ivie, group marketing director of First Choice, said: "The message is always book early or you'll miss out—but for summer 1996 this is more the case than ever before."

Research by Consumer Surveys shows that the traditional holiday market is on the decline and people are losing the inclination to lie on a beach all day. The company says that over the past three years, the number of people saying they plan to take a package holiday abroad has fallen by 48 per cent.

The industry is maintaining a calm front and predicting that by the end of the summer the number of package holidays sold through travel agents will be about 8.4 million compared with 9.3 million in 1995.

Significantly, the discounts now on offer are generally smaller than at the same time last year, reflecting the reduction in the number of holidays on offer.

Should you wait in the hope that prices tumble? Or should you buy now in the expectation that the best holidays will have gone within the next few weeks? The choice, as they say on Blind Date, is yours.

BARGAINS OF THE WEEK

FLY-DRIVE

Holidays to Florida are available from next Thursday until March 17 for £259 per person for a fortnight with Lunn Poly. The special offer, based on two adults travelling together, includes return flights from Gatwick to Miami and car hire for two weeks. Details: 01203 225888.

SAVINGS of £180 per person are available on a fortnight's holiday in Goa, departing on January 5 with Tropical Places. The new price, including bed and breakfast in a four-star hotel, is £699. Details: 01342 825123.

FIRST CHOICE has cut up to £20 off its initial brochure price for holidays to Greece next year and there are more "two weeks for the price of one" offers in its second edition brochure. Details: 01293 560777.

ROUND-THE-WORLD

FLIGHTS to Malaysia on the national airline will be available at a cut-price £485

EASYJET plans to start Luton-Aberdeen flights early next month at cost-cutting prices similar to the £29 one-way fares it already offers between Luton and Edinburgh and Glasgow. Details: 01582 445566.

FLIGHTS to Malaysia on the national airline will be available at a cut-price £485

GET ROOM

service from the kitchens of Le Gavroche, one of London's most prestigious restaurants, when staying in the residential suites at 47 Park Street. The hotel, located above the restaurant in the heart of Mayfair, is offering a special rate until January 7 of a one-bedroom suite for £170 plus VAT, compared with the normal rate of £255 plus VAT. Details: 0171-491 7822.

THE Lodge at Vail, Colorado, which claims to be the only hotel within walking distance of the resort's ski slopes, is offering rates up to 40 per cent off for guests who stay more than four nights between January 13 and 31. The promotional room rates start at £145 per room per night and include breakfast. Details: 001 970 476 5011.

CHEWTON Glen at New Milton, in Hampshire, is

HOLIDAYS

TENERIFE, popular with British visitors for Christmas this year, is available at bargain prices for 14 nights from Inspirations Holidays. Departures are from Gatwick and Manchester on January 12. Costs of £239 and £270 respectively include self-catering accommodation. Details: 01293 822244.

ORLANDO for a fortnight on a room-only basis costs from £349 per person on flights from Birmingham and Manchester on January 5 with Unifit Travel. Details: 01444 459000.

BOOK your main summer holiday before January 31 with Advantage Travel Centres, the largest group of independent travel agents, and you will be offered a free short break, including stays in Paris or Brussels via Eurostar. Details: 0800 600900.

BRITISH Airways has introduced a lower Tel Aviv business-class fare of £723 for those staying away for two days or more, a saving of £201. Details: 0181-897 4000.

AIR FRANCE has extended its offer of free parking at London City Airport for passengers flying to Paris. Details: 0181-742 6600.

GULF Air's telephone check-in service is up and running at Heathrow for first and business-class travellers to Bahrain and beyond. If they call three hours before departure, they need only report at the airport 40 minutes before the flight. Check-in no: 0181-759 4719.

Meeting new friends seems to be part of the package.
Irene
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Walking in Catalonia, exploring the Pyrenees
Adventure in the Sinai Desert; skiing in Sweden



JANET BUSH 25

No escape as nations succumb to poverty trap



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Geoff Brown on new releases and top films of 1995



SPORT 34-40

Stewart's dismissal puts England on back foot in Test

THE KGB'S LITERARY ARCHIVE
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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY DECEMBER 28 1995

Supermarkets may plug into power sales

By Ross Tienan, Industrial Correspondent

CONSUMERS could buy their gas and electricity at supermarket checkouts in little more than two years' time, when competition to supply households will be allowed nationally.

Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, said many retail groups were examining the feasibility of entering the market after the removal of local monopolies enjoyed by regional supply companies. The gas and electricity markets must be fully deregulated by April 1998.

This will open up a market of 20 million households worth £8 billion a year. With grocery returns under pressure from a price war, supermarket bosses hope that selling utility services could provide a new source of profits. "All of these chains realise that they have strengths and the resources which could be

of use in the electricity market," Professor Littlechild said. "I think all of the major chains are aware that there will be a possibility there which doesn't exist at the moment." Many have already made their interest plain to Offer, the electricity regulatory body, he said.

Leading retailers are well aware of the structural changes taking place in power markets, and the opportunities looming, because they are among the chief beneficiaries of the partial opening to competition that has already taken place.

Store chains that used to receive hundreds of bills from separate state-owned electricity boards are now able to buy all their power from a single private sector supplier, selected through a competitive bidding process that has yielded savings of 30 per cent or more.

No new wires or pipes would be needed. Retailers would simply use their purchasing power to increase the amount of energy they buy in bulk at a discount. Energy not used in their own premises could be sold on to consumers, with the retailer paying a fee for carriage to the relevant power distribution or gas pipeline company. Changing supplier would require little more effort by the consumer than signing the contract.

According to the regulator, many chain stores are well placed to sell electricity in the competitive consumer markets now being created. They have the confidence of their customers that they provide good value for money. They are expert at driving a hard bargain with suppliers and passing the benefit on to consumers, trading large volumes on slim profit margins.

And many now have their own credit cards, providing

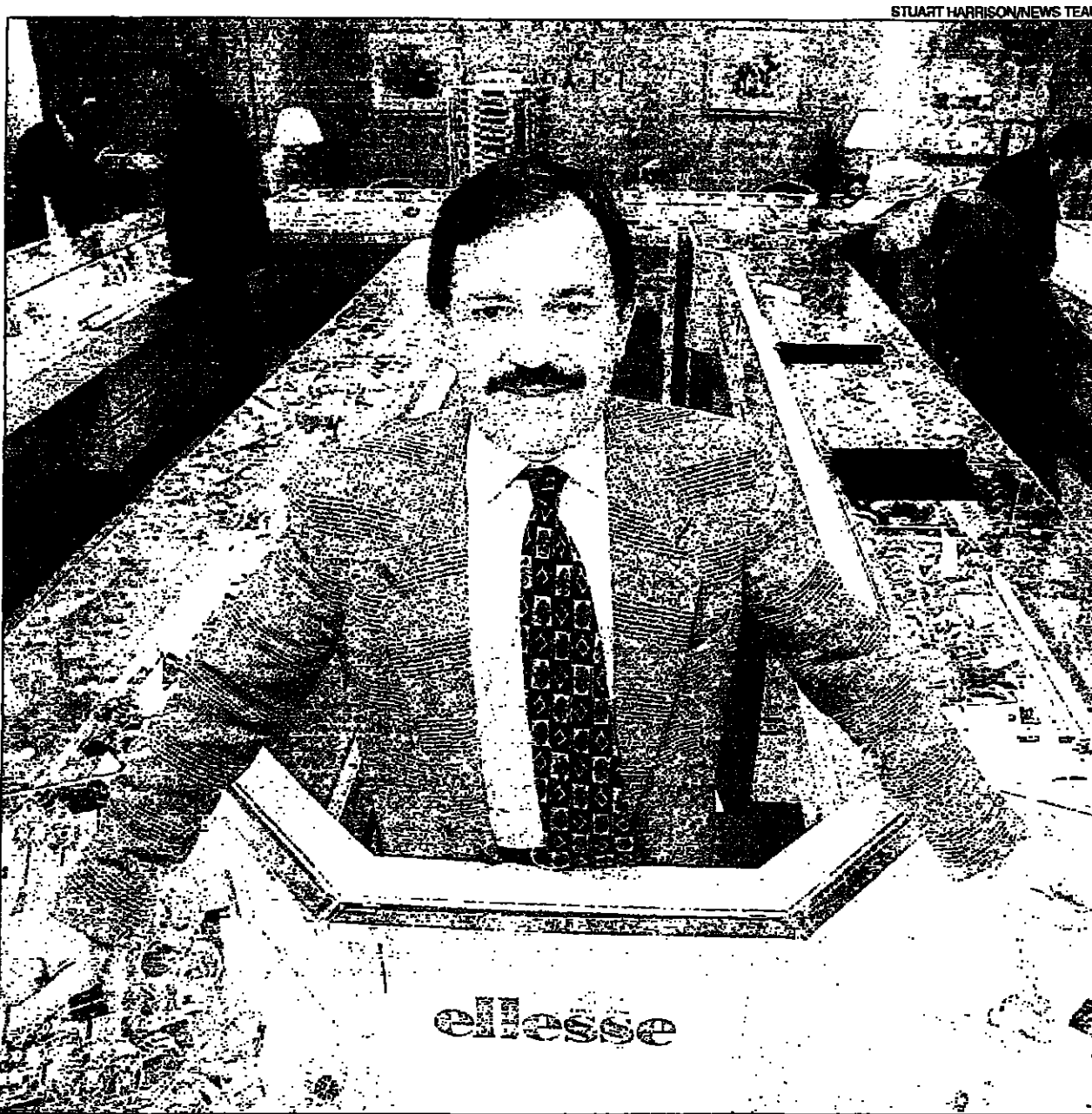
them with knowledge of customers' credit worthiness, and with the staff and systems to handle billing and payments. Some oil and gas companies setting up to compete with British Gas for household customers when competitive trials begin in April 1996 also see store groups as probable competitors. The dangers of the looming free-for-all, in which commodity energy products are sold on price, as well as services, have not been lost on British Gas.

With its own franchise under threat, and a growing expectation that customers will favour a single supplier, the company has already applied for a licence to trade in electricity with a view to offering power to household customers as well as gas.

Professor Littlechild said: "I think at some stage we will see some of the supermarkets and some of the chain stores saying 'Look, we offer the facilities for people to buy food, groceries and also clothing in our stores. Why not offer the possibility of buying gas, electricity and water?' They will be looking for ways to do that."

Some might choose to work with an existing electricity supplier, he said. These could include an electricity generator, or a regional power company anxious to extend beyond the boundaries of its existing franchise, he said.

The store groups have had some talks with Offer. They are likely to get a warm reaction if they decide to seek supply licences. "There are opportunities for people with different kinds of backgrounds and resources to move into this market, and I want to encourage that," Professor Littlechild said.



Jurek Piasecki, who says growth has been achieved without discounting and that options are still open on acquisitions

Glad tidings from Goldsmiths

By Alasdair Murray

GOLDSMITHS, the jewellery company, enjoyed a sparkling Christmas, posting a 16 per cent rise in sales to Christmas Eve.

Like-for-like sales rose 8.7 per cent in December, while over the 11 months to December 24, total sales increased by 18.8 per cent and like-for-like sales rose 7.7 per cent. Shares closed up 2p at 227p.

Jurek Piasecki, chief executive, said that the growth had been achieved without discounting and that margins had risen slightly across the

year. The results are likely to increase the pressure on Signet, formerly Ratners and struggling rivals.

Mr Piasecki said Goldsmiths was still interested in making a bid for Ernest Jones or H Samuel, which are owned by Signet, but that Signet was reluctant to enter into discussions. Goldsmiths is believed to have offered £250 million for the subsidiaries with the backing of venture capital funds.

Goldsmiths, founded in 1778, has 199 branches under

the Goldsmiths and Walker and Hall banners. It is the UK's largest distributor of Rolex, Cartier, Ebel and Omega watches, but has concentrated in recent years on improving sales in higher-margin gold and diamond jewellery. Last year's profits were £3.2 million and analysts are forecasting about £4.2 million this year.

Goldsmiths' figures are likely to provide post-Christmas cheer for the City, which is looking for a strong showing from the retail sector after

a poor autumn performance, with companies such as Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury reporting difficult trading conditions.

Early information suggests that high street sales have grown by between 6 per cent and 9 per cent on last year. The full extent of the Christmas improvement will not be known until companies such as Dixons, Asda and Marks & Spencer unveil their trading statements.

Tempus, page 24

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3676.4	(+18.1)
Yield	3.85%	
FT-SE All share	1705.71	(+8.02)
Nikkei	20011.76	(+107.04)
Dow Jones	5115.67	(+5.42)
S&P Composite	615.06	(+0.76)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)
Yield	6.01%	(6.06%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	8 1/4%	(8 1/4%)
Libor long gilt	n/a	(110 1/4)

STERLING

New York	1.5600*	(1.5430)
London	1.5601	(1.5403)
DM	2.2311	(2.2250)
FF	7.6720	(7.6250)
SF	1.7977	(1.7946)
Yen	160.30	(157.98)
E Index	83.6	(83.0)

\$\$\$ DOLLAR

London	1.4298*	(1.4376)
DM	4.8670*	(4.9186)
FF	1.1525*	(1.1573)
Yen	102.76*	(102.30)
\$ Index	93.7	(94.1)

Tokyo close Yen 102.82

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$17.80	(\$17.38)
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GOLD

London close	\$387.35	(\$387.40)
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* denotes midday trading price

Growth doubt

City and independent forecasters are unanimous in disputing the Government's Budget forecasts for 3 per cent growth and a 3.5 per cent rise in consumer spending next year, according to a comparison of predictions compiled by the Treasury. An average of 43 outside forecasters expects growth of 2.4 per cent and consumer spending of no more than 2.7 per cent. Page 22

Gas hopes

BP shares rose 10p to 545p after the oil giant announced a deal to explore for and to produce gas in the Sahara Desert with Sonatrach, the Algerian oil and gas company. Page 23

Sterling's Far East surge lifts shares

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

A SUDDEN spurt by the pound in Far Eastern markets perked up both shares and bonds in London yesterday, but dealers said that not too much should be read into this outbreak of optimism in this, holiday trading.

The pound jumped on its index against a basket of currencies, ending the day at 83.6, up from 83.0 before Christmas. It added more than a penny against the mark to DM2.2310 in late trading and was nearly two cents up on the dollar, which was quoted at \$1.5602 to the pound.

Most of this sharp upward movement came overnight before the London market opened. In Singapore, there were varying rumours of speculative buying by Middle Eastern traders, Swiss-based funds and an American hedge fund.

Traders in London said that the extra interest in sterling may be tied to the start on January 2 of the new gilt repo market in London. This will enable investors to lend gilt-edged stock in return for cash, which can then be used to finance other kinds of trading. Analysts believe that there will be strong interest in the opportunities of the new market, which should increase demand for sterling.

Gilts yesterday rallied by as much as a full point in reaction to sterling's rise and to stronger bonds overseas, but, again, traders said that trading was very thin and that movements were therefore exaggerated.

The gilt market is waiting for today's announcement by the Bank of England of its schedule for forthcoming gilt auctions. There will also be interest in today's publication of minutes of the November monetary meeting between Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, since when base rates have been cut by a quarter point.

On the stock market, the FT-SE 100 index closed 18.1 points higher, at 3676.4, just a few points below its all-time closing high.

Hopes of payout grow as Forte confirms deal

By Christine Buckley

CITY hopes that Forte may offer a special payout to shareholders in a final defence against Granada sharpened when the hotels group confirmed the sale of its roadside businesses to Whitbread in a £1.05 billion deal.

The sale would leave Forte with gearing of about 9 per cent — a level from which it could sustain a substantial dividend to shareholders. Net proceeds from the sale are likely to exceed £850 million.

Expectations are growing among analysts that Forte will promise a package of shareholder giveaways made possible on the sale of the roadside businesses, which include Little Chef, Happy Eater, Welcome Break and Travelodge, in its final defence document, due by next Tuesday.

The price struck for the businesses topped City valuations which Forte had earmarked for demerger earlier this month. One analyst said: "This move will be hard to beat. The sale implements action identified by Granada and massively reduces debt."

Under takeover rules, Sir Rocco Forte, chairman, could not comment on the contents of the defence document. He said the sale would leave the company better placed to focus its resources. "We will be purely a hotels group and well placed to take advantage of the upturn in the market."

The move switched the spotlight to Granada amid a growing belief that it would not raise its £3.3 billion unwelcome bid. Pressure is on the

leisure group to lift its offer. Gerry Robinson, Granada's chief executive, said: "Forte's break-up plan is an admission of its management's failure to obtain a reasonable return on its assets." The sale also marks a big step for Whitbread in its shift from its traditional brewing base. However, Peter Jarvis, chief executive, denied it was moving to pull out of brewing altogether.

Pennington, page 23



Sir Rocco, left, with Peter Jarvis after the sale was confirmed

Job fears 'hitting economic growth'

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

WIDESPREAD job insecurity is now a brake on economic growth and hampering the Government's electoral prospects, new poll evidence suggests today.

The findings of the Harris poll, suggesting most people believe their job is likely to be less secure in the coming year, specifically shows that both the housing market and consumer spending are likely to be hit by concern about employment.

The poll, conducted for the TUC, shows that 52 per cent of employees in Britain expect their jobs to be less secure in the coming year. Job insecurity affects all age groups, but especially those aged 35-44, and all social classes, with concern greatest in the highest social AB classes.

The findings suggest that key groups of voters — especially in the battleground of so-called Middle England that the Conservatives and the Labour Party will contest extensively at the general election — are nervous about their own jobs and so not feeling good about the economy.

Three-quarters of the representative sample of 675 employees, questioned by phone between December 15 and December 17, expect to be put under more pressure at work. Again, pressure is felt most strongly among the middle-aged and the AB social classes.

In each case, people living in London, another key election battleground, feel insecurity at work most strongly.

John Monks, TUC General Secretary, said: "These are key groups which the Conservatives must win over before the next election, but their programme to scrap basic rights at work is doing the opposite."

The survey suggests that job insecurity is feeding directly through into people's main economic decisions.

Questioned about their action on the basis of their own or their family's employment position, as many as 73 per cent of those surveyed said it would make them less likely even to consider moving house.

Three-fifths said that it would restrict them from making major household purchases.

Fisons chief executive wins £2.5m payoff

By Alasdair Murray

STUART WALLIS, the departing chief executive of Fisons, the pharmaceutical company, has negotiated a £2.5 million payoff from its new owner, the French-controlled Rhône-Poulenc Rorer.

Mr Wallis, 50, has also been approached by several companies seeking his services and is currently considering an offer to be the non-executive chairman of a service sector

company looking to float in the next three years. Mr Wallis is also believed to be seeking other directorships.

The bulk of the payoff package comes from 890,000 share options granted in November 1994 at 126p, which, when sold at the bid price of 265p, will yield a profit of £1.2 million.

Mr Wallis also receives two years' pay and a bonus, based on the performance of Fisons shares, worth about £740,000. His annual salary

immediately before Rhône-Poulenc Rorer's bid was £315,000. Mr Wallis is eligible to draw a pension worth about £45,000 as soon as he departs, even though he served only 16 months with Fisons. The total pension package is believed to be worth about £600,000.

Fisons has a history of big payoffs, which have been criticised by the City as unrelated to performance. Cedric Scroggs, the former chief executive, who was sacked in 1993, received a

total payoff worth £750,000. However, Mr Wallis is facing no such criticism: under his leadership, the market worth of Fisons has risen from £740 million to £1.83 billion, the price paid by Rhône-Poulenc Rorer earlier this year. When Mr Wallis joined in 1994, the share price was near a ten-year low of 105p, having fallen from more than 500p since 1991. Mr Wallis's strategy of selling non-core operations revitalised the stock market value of Fisons.

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□ Make or break time for Granada □ Writing on the wall for the publishers □ A snowstorm of housing forecasts

Forte's lightning roadside break

□ THERE have been a fair few Christmases ruined by the week-end's untimely leak of Whitbread's purchase of the vulgar roadside and motorway catering bits of Forte, which would leave Sir Rocco to run his decidedly upmarket hotels.

Forte's advisers have been scurrying around trying to present the deal as a favourable one, even if the timing was forced on the company by the Granada bid. Granada have been well and truly taken unawares by the speed of the Whitbread strike.

Shareholders should be pleased, because the news has clarified the position wonderfully. If the Granada offer or a higher one succeeds, then the Whitbread purchase is off. Investors can therefore take whatever mix and match of Granada cash and shares they care for or are allowed, that mix deciding whether they back Gerry Robinson and his team's skills in running the enlarged Forte group better than the incumbents, led by Sir Rocco.

If Granada fails, Forte shareholders are left with equity in a pure hotels group owning some of the better brands and with no debt. Added credibility would be gained by the parachuting in from outside of a new chief executive not connected with the Forte family.

Forte is getting a headline

figure of £1.05 billion, but this sum will drop to below £1 billion once various loose ends have been tied up, including buying out minority holders in some of the businesses and sorting out those premises held on sale and leaseback.

Less than £100 million will be payable in tax, and the resulting cash would cut borrowings to just £250 million and leave gearing below 10 per cent. Further tidying up — disposing of the Savoy stake, worth £220 million, and the eventual sale of White Hart hotels worth approaching £100 million — would then wipe out debt.

If only it were that simple. There is, alas, the small matter of the Danegeld that Forte will have to pay in the form of special dividends, share buybacks or other bribes to its own shareholders to keep them loyal. These have so far only been whispered but must be quantified in the next Forte document, expected on Tuesday, the first working day of 1996.

City institutions, rightly or wrongly, want some of those proceeds of sale diverted their

way, and they should remember to thank the Granada camp who forced the action upon Sir Rocco. This will be little comfort to Granada, now faced with the awkward decision of how much more it can afford to pay.

With a Forte share price only just ahead of the terms on offer, the indication is that not much more will be on offer. After its abrupt share price decline since the bid was launched, Granada is desperate not to be seen to overpay. The group would anyway have enormous difficulty underwriting a bid anywhere near the 380p-a-share area now being dreamed of by the City.

Sad chapter for the book trade

□ IT IS getting to that time of the year when one can start spotting the winners and losers of the Christmas shopping rush. However the jewellery trade may claim to be doing, the reckoning is that one of the losers must be the book trade.

The disintegration of the Net Book Agreement this autumn

PENNINGTON



has not been the swift stimulus that was meant to halt the long decline of book sales.

The first warning came a fortnight ago, when as part of Pearson's raft of bad news the venerable Penguin imprint said times were pretty rotten in the bookshops, blaming the trend towards lower retail margins. That was started, of course, by the disappearance of the NBA.

Enthusiasts for doing away with the old price-fixing agreement had suggested that its abolition would pave the way for a renaissance for the book trade. Consumers who balked at paying up to £20 for an item they might consume in an evening would be encouraged by lower prices. Others, drawn into the

shops by the bargains on offer, would be newly converted to the pleasures of the written word.

It didn't happen. As little as 5 per cent of publishers' lists of new books are discounted, nowhere near enough to create a sea change in public perceptions. Plenty of copies of Delia Smith and her ilk walked off the shelves, but at prices that offered little real profit for seller or publisher alike — the saintly Delia is going for half price, for example. If anything, such bargain hunting may have drawn customers away from the full-priced titles.

Other factors have exacerbated the trade's problems. Stock levels have been falling for years, to the extent that one can no longer expect to walk into a decent bookshop and find the majority of the oeuvre of any middle-ranking novelist on display. This trend has been accelerated by a move to centralised buying by big chains such as WH Smith, which cuts the size of orders from the publishers.

Firms such as Penguin are to some extent protected by their range of classics, but the shelf life

of the average new title has been falling, and payback often has to come within the year. This is bad news for some of the newer, pushier breed of publishers, the huge majority of whose lists are now effectively fashion items.

Lies, statistics and house prices

□ WHEN surveying the blizzard of surveys, prognostications and plain guesses on the state of the 1996 housing market now on display, it is worth keeping two facts firmly in mind.

The first is that they just don't know. House prices are harder to forecast than virtually any other economic statistic. As in sub-atomic physics, the market is weirdly affected by the presence of the observer, and one of the most important uncertainties is the expectation among house-owners of what prices will do next.

The second is that they all have their axes to grind. The mortgage providers are looking for 2 per cent inflation (Halifax) or 3 per cent (Nationwide). They have

their own reasons for puffing the market, but such lowly forecasts do not look like heralding much of a boom. If the Halifax is right, and City forecasts of 2.7 per cent inflation are likewise, then owners will have lost money again in real terms on their homes. Last year the Halifax was wrong, a 2 per cent forecast rise translating into an actual 1 per cent fall.

The Labour Party has its own reasons for piling on the gloom. The party has research showing which marginal constituencies have been worst hit by house price falls, and it will be out there terrifying potential voters in those areas. In the real world, homes by the end of 1996 will be just as habitable as at the start of it, given a little wear and tear — except for those unfortunate souls required to move, but trapped by negative equity.

Troubl'at t'millpond

TROUBLE, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. The boardroom at Yorkshire Water should indeed be in uproar, even if standpipes are still only a threat for its consumers. But plans to find a new chairman to succeed Sir Gordon Jones, a youthful 70 in 18 months time, do not amount to the sort of corporate blood-letting critics of the country's most hated water company had in mind.

BP shares soar to record after \$3.5bn Algerian deal

By CARL MORTISHED



Deal gives BP's Sir David Simon a foothold in gas market

BP shares raced to a new high yesterday as the City seized the first opportunity to assess a \$3.5 billion gas deal clinched over the Christmas weekend.

The shares rose 10p to 545p after the oil company said that the agreement with Sonatrach, the Algerian state oil company, to develop gas reserves deep in the Sahara, will increase BP's worldwide gas production by 30 per cent.

The deal with Sonatrach also gives BP, whose chairman is Sir David Simon, a foothold in the growing European gas market. A joint venture company will sell some 10 billion cubic metres of gas per year into Southern Europe via the Transmed pipeline into Italy and another pipeline, currently under construction, will transport gas via Morocco into Spain.

John Browne, BP exploration director, said it was a landmark agreement: "It is the first major gas joint venture, a foreign company has signed with Sonatrach, the sole gas producer in Algeria for the past 30 years."

"It has the potential to open up a new area of gas production in Algeria and, from the next decade onwards, to give European consumers greater choice in their sources of gas supply."

Oil analysts thought the

terms of the production and marketing deal was largely favourable to BP. The British company will take 30 per cent of net profit after expenses of the gas sold. Under a typical production sharing contract, the foreign oil company is likely to earn 15 per cent of the net profit.

Political risk is likely to be the reason for the higher than normal profit share. Algeria has been in civil war since the government cancelled elections in 1992 which the Islamist opposition were expected to win. Since then, armed opposition groups have waged war against the Government and have targeted foreigners, killing two pipeline workers last year.

Both the Opposition and the Government understand the importance of oil and gas which underpins the Algerian economy and makes up over 90 per cent of foreign revenues. In April, the Government cordoned off huge areas of the desert and is believed to be in negotiations with other foreign oil companies, including Exxon.

Sonatrach already exports some 30 billion cubic metres of gas, mainly to Italy by pipeline and liquefied gas by ship to Spain, France and Belgium.

Tempus, page 24

Nabisco fearful of priests' crusade

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

CAPITALISM makes strange bedfellows.

RJR Nabisco, the tobacco and foods conglomerate, was beginning to think it may have fought off the assault by two of America's most feared corporate raiders, Carl Icahn and Bennett LeBow. The two financiers want to spin off the

food from the tobacco interests, but RJR has successfully stalled their resolution in the courts.

Until, that is, two small groups of Roman Catholic priests popped up with an independent spin-off proposal of their own. The priests own a total of 980 shares but,

unfortunately for RJR, their proposal has to be taken just as seriously as that of Icahn and LeBow, who own 4.8 per cent of the entire company.

The priests are as surprised as anyone at their new role as allies of two such red-blooded capitalists. The Rev Michael Cosby, a member of the

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, said: "If a celibate can use the phrase, sometimes you end up with strange bed partners."

Mr LeBow, who does not wear his religious convictions on his sleeve, remarked: "Interest in an immediate spin-off is clearly non-denominational." But while Mr Icahn and Mr LeBow want the spin-off because they smell profits, the priests support it on the moral grounds that a wicked tobacco company should not be linked to a perfectly good food company.

RJR has had to take this new threat seriously. If the Icahn-LeBow resolution fails against the company's legal challenge, shareholders will still be able to vote on the priests' proposal at an annual meeting in April. RJR has already fired off a complaint to the Securities and Exchange Commission and has tried unsuccessfully to persuade the priests to drop their proposal.

The embattled company senses a formidable combination of interests it may not be able to beat. "If you're a shareholder with a heart, you'd want to vote with the priests," said Sarah Teslik, executive director of the Council of Institutional Investors. "If you're an investor with a pocket-book, you'd want to vote with LeBow and Icahn. RJR's horse-trading suggests they are scared to death of the spin-off proposal."

It would be ironic if RJR Nabisco, once the target of the biggest and most notorious management buyout of all time, was finally broken up by a group of priests who disapproved of smoking.

MORTGAGES NOTICE OF INTEREST RATE VARIATION ON MORTGAGES FROM BANK OF SCOTLAND BRANCHES

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Dispute ends at Tate & Lyle subsidiary

THE long-running dispute over working conditions at Staley, Tate & Lyle's US subsidiary, ended yesterday after union members voted to accept the latest offer (Alasdair Murray writes).

Fifty-six per cent voted to accept the offer although it was not recommended by their union, the United Paperworkers International Union. The new contracts include improved severance pay and pension rights, union representation and a no-strike clause. Union members said they will return to work from January.

The dispute began three years ago, after Larry Pillard, Staley chief executive, shortly to take over from Sir Neil Shaw as chief executive of T&L, launched a programme to improve productivity. T&L shares rose 6p to 468p.

Power firms get £680m sale boost

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

ELECTRICITY shareholders are likely to be in line for more payouts next year after their companies swept up about £680 million from the sale of a hydroelectricity division.

Proceeds from the sale of First Hydro exceeded expectations after Mission Energy, of the US, outbid rivals that included Scotland's Hydro-Electric. The regional electricity companies, which have this year passed millions of pounds to their shareholders in special dividends and other returns, are not outlining plans for their cash, but analysts expect similar actions from the companies, which have pledged to boost shareholder returns and gear up their balance sheets.

First Hydro, which operates hydroelectricity plants in Wales, had been part of the National Grid, which was

jointly owned by all the regional electricity companies before its flotation this month.

The cash returns for the companies, which had differing stakes in the business, are considerable. The highest beneficiaries include Southern Electric, which received £74.5 million from its 10.95 per cent interest, London Electricity (£71 million from 10.46 per cent) and Midlands Electricity (£62.4 million from 9.17 per cent). Seeboard netted £50 million from its 7.3 per cent and Northern Electric £44 million from its 6.47 per cent.

The price paid for First Hydro, which was £652.5 million, with the remainder of the benefit to the electricity companies coming from its cash balances, was much higher than the City's initial expectations, by which the price had been pitched at £350 million.

Codelco sues metal firm after losses

CODELCO, Chile's state-owned copper combine, which lost \$170 million through futures trading in 1993, is suing Sogemim, a London metal firm, to try to regain some of its losses (Colin Campbell writes).

The suit comes after two years of investigations into trading on the futures market by Juan Pablo Davila, a former Codelco trader, against whom fraud charges were laid last July. The copper scandal rocked Chile, and Codelco's then-president resigned.

Juan Villalaz, Codelco's new president, said that Chile was determined to "discover the truth and punish those who are guilty", but conceded that Codelco does not expect to recover all of its losses.

Chilean authorities say funds connected with the copper futures deals have been traced to banks in unidentified tax havens in the Caribbean.

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ACCOUNTANCY

Steering group on tax vital

David Brodie advocates taking action now to guard standards

If you fancy running your own business, you could look at setting up shop as a tax adviser, helping the public with their tax returns. Indeed, you could undercut the big accountancy firms, with their expensive overheads, and it could be a nice little earner.

It is still not widely appreciated that — in spite of increasing regulation of the accountancy profession — absolutely anyone can set up as a tax adviser, regardless of qualifications or experience.

TaxAid provides free advice to people with tax problems who cannot afford to pay for help and several of our clients have, in more prosperous times, employed tax professionals. Last year, 62 clients sought help from us in resolving the consequences of misconduct by former advisers.

Complaints ranged from negligence in failing to deal with appeals or returns on time, to incompetence evidenced by fundamental errors in tax computations, to disappearances with clients' records and the occasional fraud. These cases comprised 4 per cent of our work which, if extrapolated nationwide, suggests a big problem. This view has been echoed by Elizabeth Fülkin, the Revenue Adjudicator.

In her recent report, she said: "We drew attention in last year's report to the poor quality of service we had seen provided to some complainants. We have continued to see worrying examples of apparently poor practice."

It is generally accepted by all those working in the tax field that there are practitioners whose conduct falls below acceptable standards, and poor practice is not limited to unqualified practitioners. Indeed, there are many former Revenue employees now in private practice providing a far more proficient specialist tax service than some "qualified" individuals.

So why has nothing been done? Perhaps because historically no one has seen it as their problem. The Revenue has always taken a neutral line and says it will work with any agent whom the taxpayer appoints — although it is known that local tax offices do have informal "blacklists" of dodgy practitioners. The traditional view of the professional bodies has been that the public should seek advice from their own members, who have passed examinations and are subject to the disciplinary regime of their institute. A related argument has been



David Brodie wants regulation before problems arise

that people should be free to appoint who they like. But the choices facing someone appointing a tax adviser are complex. More importantly, the issue can no longer be ducked with the impending introduction of self-assessment in 1996-97. In spite of

government denials, many will be consulting an adviser for the first time. Unregulated "tax shops" will inevitably mushroom, staffed by people with good computers but little understanding of tax.

In the absence of regulation, problems will spiral, leading

to public demands for change. Any resulting scheme, introduced speedily, could saddle all tax professionals — including members of the professional bodies — with a much more bureaucratic and costly regime than if they had taken the initiative in the first place.

Faced by this scenario, TaxAid has published a report, sponsored by the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, which explores the issues in detail and looks at the solutions adopted in other countries. Written by Sue Green of Bristol University, the report recommends the formation of a steering group to take the issue forward as a matter of urgency. The report has been welcomed by the Chartered Institute of Taxation, which describes itself as "the leading professional body in the UK concerned solely with taxation". It says that any new regime should be independent of the Revenue.

The tax faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the other leading player, has not been as enthusiastic. It fears the costs of any new system, but says it may change its views if it is apparent that incompetent or dishonest advice is a greater problem than hitherto realised. Copies of the report are available free by writing to Sue Green, Dept of Economics, University of Bristol, 8 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1TN. The author is director of TaxAid.

Blood, sweat and accountancy at PW

IT IS the season of unused book tokens. And what better to do with them than buy a history of Price Waterhouse? I mean it. The book, in spite of its slightly ponderous title, *True and Fair — A History of Price Waterhouse*, is a rattling good read.

Take Sammy Price, one of the founding fathers, who was born the eleventh child of a Bristol potter in 1821. The other half of the founding names, Edwin Waterhouse, was said to have had "the greatest admiration for him, not only as an accountant but as a pugilist. If he ever saw a fight going on nothing could stop him from diving in and having a good time. In the days of the Fenian riots in the 1850s, on several occasions he turned up to the office in a very dishevelled and somewhat bloodstained condition".

Or you could use the excellent maps and research to retrace the Victorian network of the embryonic accountancy profession. The key to the growth of accountancy in London was the location of the bankruptcy court in Basinghall Street, with nearly all the fledgling profession's work in what was seen as the unsavoury business of sorting out the affairs of bankrupt companies.

To judge from the maps, William Welch Deloitte had the office by far the closest to the court. But as Edgar Jones, author of the book, points out, the success of what became Price Waterhouse was due to arriving slightly late on the scene. While other firms remained insolvent based, Price and Waterhouse concentrated on the new business of auditing. They caught the railway boom and never looked back. The income was phenomenal, as indeed it has been throughout the firm's history. It is only a pity that the earnings figures charted in the book cease at 1975.

There are serious points and parallels to be drawn from the book as well. The profession's greatest period was probably the 1920s and for Price Waterhouse their greatest asset was Sir Gilbert Garnsey. Described in the popular press as "the wizard of accountancy" he was, says Jones, "almost without rival in the City as an accountant of popular esteem".

This is the period when the profession was blessed with people who blended supreme technical ability with administrative brilliance and enormous flair at getting the work in. Garnsey was probably the greatest at

combining these elements. But overwork got him. He died in 1932 just before taking up the position of senior partner. His estate, Jones records, "was valued at £151,466 gross, a substantial sum by the standards of the day."

Then, as now, great growth also brought scandals. The Royal Mail Steam Packet case in 1931 was the most famous. The company had relied on secret transfers of reserves to make it appear profitable. It went bust. The dominant chairman and the Price Waterhouse auditor, Harold Morland, went on trial accused of publishing false statements.

Morland argued that the balance sheet was true and fair. Counsel asked him: "It is very important for a shareholder to know what current earnings his company is making?" To which Morland replied: "I do not see why." Both were acquitted. Morland's wife rang the court before the verdict to ask whether he was likely to be late for dinner that evening. "Yes, madam," said his solicitor. "I should think about 12 months late."

In spite of the acquittal, the trial was a setback for the profession and gradually it retreated into an insular world of technical argument. Referring to two senior partners in the postwar years, Jones says: "Neither sought innovation. Neither saw themselves as businessmen or as men who were running a commercial enterprise for profit."

Those words have a ring about them. They are the sort of concept condemned in the 1980s as the firms went for growth. Then, as in Garnsey's day, it all ended in the courts.

There is a need to break this circle. At the conference with which Price Waterhouse celebrated publication of the book, Professor Geoffrey Whittington argued that accountancy is "still an adolescent profession". He thought the sheer multitude of services it offered showed that clearly. But in the future, he argued, quality would be more important than quantity.

Or as Jones writes: "The modern image of a successful accountant is a person who is assertive, committed, technically expert and ambitious. The contrast with those unqualified Victorian progenitors who congregated in City bars waiting for lucrative insolvency commissions to fall into their laps is sharp. True and Fair, by Edgar Jones, is published by Hamish Hamilton at £25.



ROBERT BRUCE

A change of hat for PW man

THE wearing of two hats at once can confuse a person. Last week, the *Money Programme* did a brief item on the move by firms such as Price Waterhouse towards setting up limited liability partnerships in Jersey. Imagine informed viewers' surprise when the spokesman appearing for the English ICA turned out to be one Graham Ward, who also happens, though the caption on the screen failed to mention it, to be a partner at

Price Waterhouse. There was even greater surprise when this institute spokesman was asked to comment on an aspect of Price Waterhouse's actions. "I wouldn't know about that," said Ward. Some viewers claimed to detect a faint smile on his face.

Takeaway pies

SCANDAL is afoot at the headquarters of the English ICA. All the goodwill of

Christmas was set aside as questions of theft were aired beneath the holly and the tinsel. The press conference to announce the proposals for a merger between the English ICA and CIMA, the management accounting body, was conducted in a spirit of jolly seasonal bonhomie. And Brian Currie, the deputy president, ended it with an invitation to join him for mince pies. The problem was that the trolley outside the

door was bare. As a spokeswoman succinctly put it: "They'd been stolen."

To coin a phrase

THE card of the season was undoubtedly that from CA Magazine, the Scots ICA business magazine. It was called "three years of solid economic growth Christmas card" and claimed to be so cost-effective that the magazine was able to refund 50p of

fixed to the back of each card. Inside the card, one Penny Prim gave interesting advice on things to do with your 50p. The coin, of course, was missing. But a helpline number for just such emergencies was available. On that Ms Prim was informing callers that they were sad old skinflints.

THE devil, of course, is in the detail. The *Inland Revenue* report, The Path To Tax Simplification, runs to an admirably brief 43 pages. But the background papers total 181.

ROBERT BRUCE

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High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
BANKS						
267.5	267.0	Barclays Bank	267.5	+0.5	+0.2	10.1
185.0	184.5	HSBC Bank	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	London City	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Paragon Bank	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Yorkshire Bank	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
DISTRIBUTORS						
185.0	184.5	Asda Stores	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Debenhams	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	John Lewis	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Next	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Primark	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
BREWERIES						
185.0	184.5	Adnams	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Beck's	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Carlsberg	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Guinness	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Heineken	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS						
185.0	184.5	British Airways	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Petroleum	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Steel	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Sugar	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
ENGINEERING VEHICLES						
185.0	184.5	Rolls Royce	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Volvo	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	BMW	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Mercedes-Benz	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Audi	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
FOOD MANUFACTURERS						
185.0	184.5	Unilever	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Wm Morrison	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Asda	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Debenhams	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	John Lewis	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
ELECTRICITY						
185.0	184.5	British Nuclear Fuels	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Energy	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	EDF Energy	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Centrica	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Gas	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
ELECTRONIC & ELECT						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecommunications	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecommunications	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecommunications	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecommunications	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
BUILDING MATERIALS						
185.0	184.5	British Cement	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Cement	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Cement	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Cement	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Cement	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
BUSINESS SERVICES						
185.0	184.5	British Airways	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Airways	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Airways	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Airways	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Airways	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
CHEMICALS						
185.0	184.5	British Chemicals	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Chemicals	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Chemicals	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Chemicals	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Chemicals	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
PHARMACEUTICALS						
185.0	184.5	AstraZeneca	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	GlaxoSmithKline	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Novartis	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Pfizer	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	Schering-Plough	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
PRINTING & PAPER						
185.0	184.5	De La Rue	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	De La Rue	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	De La Rue	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	De La Rue	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	De La Rue	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
SUPPORT SERVICES						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
PROPERTY						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
TELECOMMUNICATIONS						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
TEXTILES & APPAREL						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
TRANSPORT						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1



For further information please contact Carley & Clements, 23, Grosvenor Street, London W1X 9PE. Tel: 0171-415 4160. Fax: 0171-415 4161.

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
HOUSEHOLD GOODS						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
HEALTHCARE						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
INSURANCE						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
INVESTMENT TRUSTS						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
SHORTS (under 5 years)						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
LONGS (over 15 years)						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of 2.5%						
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1
185.0	184.5	British Telecom	185.0	+0.5	+0.3	10.1

1995 Low High 1994 Low High 1993 Low High							1995 Low High 1994 Low High 1993 Low High																							
Low High 1994 Low High 1993 Low High							Low High 1994 Low High 1993 Low High																							
158	112	Brown Oatmeal	153	49	15.8	29.9	155	101	East Group	195	41	16.4	178	128	Canada's	170	22	16.8	240	190	Canada's	200	10	17.0	240	190	Canada's	200	10	17.0
159	113	Cardiac	154	50	16.0	30.0	156	102	East Group	196	42	16.5	179	129	Canada's	171	23	16.9	241	191	Canada's	201	11	17.1	241	191	Canada's	201	11	17.1
160	114	Cardiac	155	51	16.2	30.2	157	103	East Group	197	43	16.6	180	130	Canada's	172	24	17.0	242	192	Canada's	202	12	17.2	242	192	Canada's	202	12	17.2
161	115	Cardiac	156	52	16.4	30.4	158	104	East Group	198	44	16.7	181	131	Canada's	173	25	17.1	243	193	Canada's	203	13	17.3	243	193	Canada's	203	13	17.3
162	116	Cardiac	157	53	16.6	30.6	159	105	East Group	199	45	16.8	182	132	Canada's	174	26	17.2	244	194	Canada's	204	14	17.4	244	194	Canada's	204	14	17.4
163	117	Cardiac	158	54	16.8	30.8	160	106	East Group	200	46	16.9	183	133	Canada's	175	27	17.3	245	195	Canada's	205	15	17.5	245	195	Canada's	205	15	17.5
164	118	Cardiac	159	55	17.0	31.0	161	107	East Group	201	47	17.0	184	134	Canada's	176	28	17.4	246	196	Canada's	206	16	17.6	246	196	Canada's	206	16	17.6
165	119	Cardiac	160	56	17.2	31.2	162	108	East Group	202	48	17.1	185	135	Canada's	177	29	17.5	247	197	Canada's	207	17	17.7	247	197	Canada's	207	17	17.7
166	120	Cardiac	161	57	17.4	31.4	163	109	East Group	203	49	17.2	186	136	Canada's	178	30	17.6	248	198	Canada's	208	18	17.8	248	198	Canada's	208	18	17.8
167	121	Cardiac	162	58	17.6	31.6	164	110	East Group	204	50	17.3	187	137	Canada's	179	31	17.7	249	199	Canada's	209	19	17.9	249	199	Canada's	209	19	17.9
168	122	Cardiac	163	59	17.8	31.8	165	111	East Group	205	51	17.4	188	138	Canada's	180	32	17.8	250	200	Canada's	210	20	18.0	250	200	Canada's	210	20	18.0
169	123	Cardiac	164	60	18.0	32.0	166	112	East Group	206	52	17.5	189	139	Canada's	181	33	17.9	251	201	Canada's	211	21	18.1	251	201	Canada's	211	21	18.1
170	124	Cardiac	165	61	18.2	32.2	167	113	East Group	207	53	17.6	190	140	Canada's	182	34	18.0	252	202	Canada's	212	22	18.2	252	202	Canada's	212	22	18.2
171	125	Cardiac	166	62	18.4	32.4	168	114	East Group	208	54	17.7	191	141	Canada's	183	35	18.1	253	203	Canada's	213	23	18.3	253	203	Canada's	213	23	18.3
172	126	Cardiac	167	63	18.6	32.6	169	115	East Group	209	55	17.8	192	142	Canada's	184	36	18.2	254	204	Canada's	214	24	18.4	254	204	Canada's	214	24	18.4
173	127	Cardiac	168	64	18.8	32.8	170	116	East Group	210	56	17.9	193	143	Canada's	185	37	18.3	255	205	Canada's	215	25	18.5	255	205	Canada's	215	25	18.5
174	128	Cardiac	169	65	19.0	33.0	171	117	East Group	211	57	18.0	194	144	Canada's	186	38	18.4	256	206	Canada's	216	26	18.6	256	206	Canada's	216	26	18.6
175	129	Cardiac	170	66	19.2	33.2	172	118	East Group	212	58	18.1	195	145	Canada's	187	39	18.5	257	207	Canada's	217	27	18.7	257	207	Canada's	217	27	18.7
176	130	Cardiac	171	67	19.4	33.4	173	119	East Group	213	59	18.2	196	146	Canada's	188	40	18.6	258	208	Canada's	218	28	18.8	258	208	Canada's	218	28	18.8
177	131	Cardiac	172	68	19.6	33.6	174	120	East Group	214	60	18.3	197	147	Canada's	189	41	18.7	259	209	Canada's	219	29	18.9	259	209	Canada's	219	29	18.9
178	132	Cardiac	173	69	19.8	33.8	175	121	East Group	215	61	18.4	198	148	Canada's	190	42	18.8	260	210	Canada's	220	30	19.0	260	210	Canada's	220	30	19.0
179	133	Cardiac	174	70	20.0	34.0	176	122	East Group	216	62	18.5	199	149	Canada's	191	43	18.9	261	211	Canada's	221	31	19.1	261	211	Canada's	221	31	19.1
180	134	Cardiac	175	71	20.2	34.2	177	123	East Group	217	63	18.6	200	150	Canada's	192	44	19.0	262	212	Canada's	222	32	19.2	262	212	Canada's	222	32	19.2
181	135	Cardiac	176	72	20.4	34.4	178	124	East Group	218	64	18.7	201	151	Canada's	193	45	19.1	263	213	Canada's	223	33	19.3	263	213	Canada's	223	33	19.3
182	136	Cardiac	177	73	20.6	34.6	179	125	East Group	219	65	18.8	202	152	Canada's	194	46	19.2	264	214	Canada's	224	34	19.4	264	214	Canada's	224	34	19.4
183	137	Cardiac	178	74	20.8	34.8	180	126	East Group	220	66	18.9	203	153	Canada's	195	47	19.3	265	215	Canada's	225	35	19.5	265	215	Canada's	225	35	19.5
184	138	Cardiac	179	75	21.0	35.0	181	127	East Group	221	67	19.0	204	154	Canada's	196	48	19.4	266	216	Canada's	226	36	19.6	266	216	Canada's	226	36	19.6
185	139	Cardiac	180	76	21.2	35.2	182	128	East Group	222	68	19.1	205	155	Canada's	197	49	19.5	267	217	Canada's	227	37	19.7	267	217	Canada's	227	37	19.7
186	140	Cardiac	181	77	21.4	35.4	183	129	East Group	223	69	19.2	206	156	Canada's	198	50	19.6	268	218	Canada's	228	38	19.8	268	218	Canada's	228	38	19.8
187	141	Cardiac	182	78	21.6	35.6	184	130	East Group	224	70	19.3	207	157	Canada's	199	51	19.7	269	219	Canada's	229	39	19.9	269	219	Canada's	229	39	19.9
188	142	Cardiac	183	79	21.8	35.8	185	131	East Group	225	71	19.4	208	158	Canada's	200	52	19.8	270	220	Canada's	230	40	20.0	270	220	Canada's	230	40	20.0
189	143	Cardiac	184	80	22.0	36.0	186	132	East Group	226	72	19.5	209	159	Canada's	201	53	19.9	271	221	Canada's	231	41	20.1	271	221	Canada's	231	41	20.1
190	144	Cardiac	185	81	22.2	36.2	187	133	East Group	227	73	19.6	210	160	Canada's	202	54	20.0	272	222	Canada's	232	42	20.2	272	222	Canada's	232	42	20.2
191	145	Cardiac	186	82	22.4	36.4	188	134	East Group	228	74	19.7	211	161	Canada's	203	55	20.1	273	223	Canada's	233	43	20.3	273	223	Canada's	233	43	20.3
192	146	Cardiac	187	83	22.6	36.6	189	135	East Group	229	75	19.8	212	162	Canada's	204	56	20.2	274	224	Canada's	234	44	20.4	274	224	Canada's	234	44	20.4
193	147	Cardiac	188	84	22.8	36.8	190	136	East Group	230	76	19.9	213	163	Canada's	205	57	20.3	275	225	Canada's	235	45	20.5	275	225	Canada's	235	45	20.5
194	148	Cardiac	189	85	23.0	37.0	191	137	East Group	231	77	20.0	214	164	Canada's	206	58	20.4	276	226	Canada's	236	46	20.6	276	226	Canada's	236	46	20.6
195	149	Cardiac	190	86	23.2	37.2	192	138	East Group	232	78	20.1	215	165	Canada's	207	59	20.5	277	227	Canada's	237	47	20.7	277	227	Canada's	237	47	20.7
196	150	Cardiac	191	87	23.4	37.4	193	139	East Group	233	79	20.2	216	166	Canada's	208	60	20.6	278	228	Canada's	238	48	20.8	278	228	Canada's	238	48	20.8
197	151	Cardiac	192	88	23.6	37.6	194	140	East Group	234	80	20.3	217	167	Canada's	209	61	20.7	279	229	Canada's	239	49	20.9	279	229	Canada's	239	49	20.9
198	152	Cardiac	193	89	23.8	37.8	195	141	East Group	235	81	20.4	218	168	Canada's	210	62	20.8	280	230	Canada's	240	50	21.0	280	230	Canada's	240	50	21.0
199	153	Cardiac	194	90	24.0	38.0	196	142	East Group	236	82	20.5	219	169	Canada's	211	63	20.9	281	231	Canada's	241	51	21.1	281	231	Canada's	241	51	21.1
200	154	Cardiac	195	91	24.2	38.2	197	143	East Group	237	83	20.6	220	170	Canada's	212	64	21.0	282	232	Canada's	242	52	21.2	282	232	Canada's	242	52	21.2
201	155	Cardiac	196	92	24.4	38.4	198	144	East Group	238	84	20.7	221	171	Canada's	213	65	21.1	283	233	Canada's	243	53	21.3	283	233	Canada's	243	53	21.3
202	156	Cardiac	197	93	24.6	38.6	199	145	East Group	239	85	20.8	222	172	Canada's	214	66	21.2	284	234	Canada's	244	54	21.4	284	234	Canada's	244	54	21.4
203	157	Cardiac	198	94	24.8	38.8	200	146	East Group	240	86	20.9	223	173	Canada's	215	67	21.3	285	235	Canada's	245	55	21.5	285	235	Canada's	245	55	21.5
204	158	Cardiac	199	95	25.0	39.0	201	147	East Group	241	87	21.0	224	174	Canada's	216	68	21.4	286	236	Canada's	246	56	21.6	286	236	Canada's	246	56	21.6
205	159	Cardiac	200	96	25.2	39.2	202	148	East Group	242	88	21.1	225	175	Canada's	217	69	21.5	287	237	Canada's	247	57	21.7	287	237	Canada's	247	57	21.7
206	160	Cardiac	201	97	25.4	39.4	203	149	East Group	243	89	21.2	226	176	Canada's	218	70	21.6	288	238	Canada's	248	58	21.8	288	238	Canada's	248	58	21.8
207	161	Cardiac	202	98	25.6	39.6	204	150	East Group	244	90	21.3	227	1																

THE TIMES

CITY DIARY

Branson battle for film seats

WHATEVER else Richard Branson may have received for Christmas, he didn't get planning permission from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to increase the number of screens and seats at Virgin's MGM cinema in Fulham Road. The Environment Department planning inspector has dismissed an appeal by MGM Cinemas that the council had acted improperly when it failed to determine the planning application within the prescribed time limit.

Branson wanted to increase the number of screens from five to eight, and the seating capacity from 1,455 to 2,186.

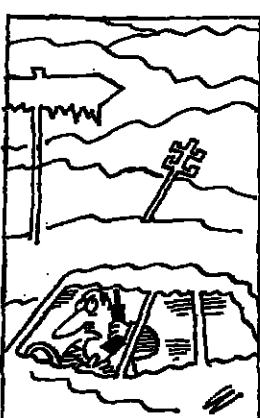
However, that would have involved demolishing the adjoining former South Kensington Squash Club, says the *London Weekly Times*. MGM Cinemas, it adds, is consulting lawyers about a possible appeal to the High Court.

Getting together

IT'S THAT time of the year for giving, receiving... and getting engaged. Against a background of City revelry yesterday, the vivacious Glenda Boswell and man-about-town Trevor Bass told me of their engagement - of their respective firms, Boswell Partnership and City Financial PR. The new name will be Boswell-City Financial Partnership.

Out with a bang?

KPMG assures me that its FT advert just three days before Christmas was no joke. It recorded that the joint administrative receivers were offering for sale College Crackers, a Christmas cracker maker, and, together or separately, its division making retail display decorations known as Robbedex.



"Hello BP - I'd like some warm Sahara gas please"

Lit up again

ERNE THOMPSON is again enjoying the full glory of his huge office in Forbes House, the opulent London HQ of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. And if you hear him singing *When the lights go on again*, all over the world... here's why.

The society's chief executive watched with alarm as bulbs popped one by one in the spectacular crystal chandelier over his desk and the gloom became so deep he had to send for maintenance staff.

Unfortunately, so many of the 50 or so bulbs had gone, it took staff nearly two days to replace them.

Thompson says: "I had no idea just how big that chandelier was. They were up there for so long, I thought I would be sitting in the dark for the rest of my time at the SMMT."

And, finally, City Diary's call for readers to name a perfume for British Airways has brought two suggestions from the Far East. One says: "It should be Volée (flight), and should NOT smell of those horrible hot towels." The other says: "Having on several occasions endured the noxious aroma of the aircraft on landing at Hong Kong, I think the most appropriate name should be Hong Pong."

COLIN CAMPBELL

ECONOMIC VIEW

JANET BUSH

Nowhere to run as nations succumb to poverty trap

Britain had the sharpest rises in poverty and income inequality in the 1980s

There is something wonderfully provocative about parliamentary committees that makes even the most battle-hardened politicians and businessmen shoot their mouths off and live to regret it. We may all have become thoroughly jaded about the cradle of our democracy but these committees have a knack of showing people in their true colours.

Remember the famous appearance by Iain Vallance, chairman of British Telecom, who said he envied the working hours of a junior hospital doctor, or Bank of England Governor Eddie George's loss of public cool when he accused the Treasury Select Committee of baying for the blood of his staff after the collapse of Barings?

Even Kenneth Clarke, the nice bloke who believes in public services and little Midlands engineering firms, had an outbreak of apoplexy before Christmas. Asked by the Treasury committee about the effect of his Budget on the poorest 10 per cent measured by income (the tenth decile as it is known), he said this group drove him up the wall. Many of them, he asserted, had very good accountants.

Underlying the Chancellor's unfortunate remark is a society-wide embarrassment about growing inequality and the apparent permanence of poverty even in the richest societies. It is not just Conservatives who are guilty of parading their ineffectuality in the face of society's economic extremes. Jack Straw, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, misinterpreted his own party's drive for the middle ground by launching an attack on beggars, winos and squeegee merchants, an outbreak that helped, along with female quotas, to lose him his place on the National Executive Committee.

Some experts go to enormous lengths to dismiss poverty as an issue. Richard Fryke, in a pamphlet for the Institute of Economic Affairs, argued that official poverty statistics are grossly misleading, one of his arguments being that leisure time is not properly valued.

He disputes the common view that losing one's job makes one more unhappy. An official survey of unemployed showed that 34 per cent of those who lost their jobs were unhappier, compared with 13 per cent who were happier.

Among those who then found jobs, 44 per cent were happier and only 12 per cent became less happy.

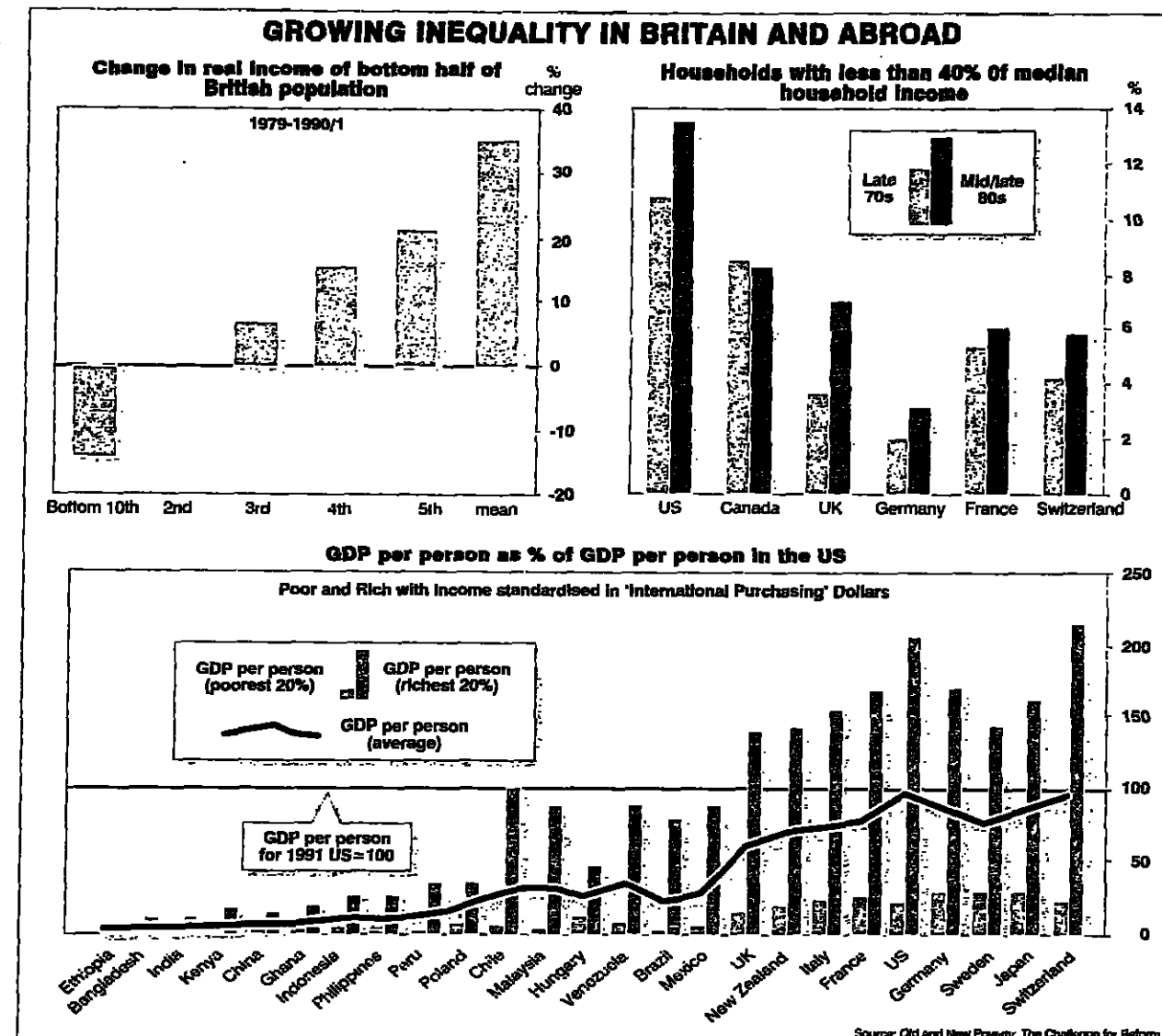
Not satisfied with the glaring obviousness of this, Mr Fryke invites us to look at it in a different way. Two-thirds of those who became unemployed did not become less happy and 56 per cent of those

who then got jobs did not become any happier. This, he concludes, means that a majority of the unemployed place a significant value on their leisure. Is it not possible that people did not become happier when they got a job because they were badly paid and remained just as worried about being laid off again?

Britain and other rich societies just do not know how to deal with mass unemployment and entrenched poverty. Indeed, solutions seem further off than ever as governments try to limit social spending and rely on greater labour market flexibility.

Leading economists in Germany say that the country could do with a good dose of Thatcherism to expose industry to the discipline of the market and erode the generous benefits afforded by the social security system. France's autocracy of social and industrial protections is under the severest pressure because of the drive to meet the Maastricht criteria.

It is worrying that continental economies want to emulate the Anglo-Saxon free market economic model for it is America and Britain that have seen the greatest increase in income inequality and poverty.



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It is worrying that continental economies want to emulate the Anglo-Saxon free market economic model for it is America and Britain that have seen the greatest increase in income inequality and poverty.

Roger Lawson, senior lecturer in social policy at the University of Southampton, writing in a new collection of essays under the auspices of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation called *Old and New Poverty: The Challenge for Reform*, defines poverty as households with a disposable income of less than 50 per cent

of the average disposable income in each country.

According to this definition, almost one in five of non-elderly households in the United States fell below the 50 per cent poverty line by the second half of the 1980s under Reaganian free market policies.

In studies both by the European Commission and the Washington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Britain has the distinction of having experienced the sharpest increases in poverty and income inequality in the 1980s. Between 1979 and 1990-91, the average real income of the bottom tenth of households (after housing costs) fell 14 per cent, a figure surely not achieved by any

temporarily on hard times, somehow slipping through the social safety net, and the almost permanent kind of poverty which has resulted from mass unemployment and been exacerbated as the frontiers of the State have been rolled back. This new poverty is passed like a fatal gene from one generation to the next, the children of unemployed parents being far more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty themselves.

In the past, poverty used to hit older people particularly hard but that has improved a great deal. In Britain, the number of old people living on social security fell 25 per cent between 1974 and 1991. But, over the same time, the number of children under 16 dependent on benefits has quadrupled.

There is, even in a successful economy such as Germany, a brutal kind of centrifugal force, flinging people to the extremes of affluence and poverty. Over the past 20 years, economic growth has risen by more than 70 per cent in real terms in Germany but the number of poor has more than doubled in the same period. The concept of solidarity has almost disappeared from our vocabulary. Society includes some and excludes others and it is difficult to see how to break this down.

Clearly, a re-expansion of the welfare state is not a runner. This would not only be economically unsustainable but ineffective at including the excluded.

The Conservatives have, along with the other parties, been groping slowly towards other structural ways in which economic exclusion can be eased: a changing balance between benefits and taxation, more subsidised child care, greater provision of training and a drive towards better educational standards.

But it is likely that these measures, even if useful at the margin or in the longer-term, will be rendered meaningless if Britain continues to pursue the tactic of frightening the workforce into accepting low wages and our European neighbours are tempted to emulate the approach.

Therein lies insecurity on a scale that destroys incentives and has ensured that the "feel-good" factor is missing from the current British recovery. As Chris Pond, of the Low Pay Unit, puts it: "Uncertainty is the enemy of flexibility. Without protection of their employment and living standards, people are less willing to take risks and accept change."

Mr Pond quotes two great Conservatives on the subject. In 1909, Winston Churchill said that "decent conditions make for industrial efficiency and increase rather than decrease competitive power". In 1946, Harold Macmillan welcomed the fair wages provision as "the protector, certainly of the standard of living of the workers, but also of the standards of competence and honour of industry as a whole".

Messrs Clarke and Straw would do well to forbid themselves the indulgence of prejudice and panic in an admittedly difficult economic climate the world over and remember such common sense from an earlier time.

Old and New Poverty: The Challenge for Reform, Rivers Oram Press. Paperback price: £9.95.

New poverty is passed like a fatal gene from one generation to the next

of the average disposable income in each country.

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US holds key to NatWest's global plans

Richard Thomson finds that time is of the essence for an ambitious bank

With the sale of NatWest Bancorp last week, National Westminster Bank has finally pulled out of retail banking in America. It will also have more than \$3 billion burning a hole in its pocket and it seems certain that a chunk of that will be ploughed back into the US.

For although NatWest has left the high streets, its ambitions in America remain immense. Its aim is to build NatWest Markets, its securities and money markets operation, into a "bulge bracket" investment bank competing with the likes of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley. This is the key part of a global strategy to make NWM into a leading world investment bank. The success of this global ambition depends crucially on success in the US.

"We want to be prime service providers to international investors because the world is moving into an era of a few globally dominant securities houses," explains Peter Hall, the head of NWM in America, who is

tion expected to produce "good money" this year. NWM has a thriving derivatives and swaps business as well as a strong foreign exchange and treasury operation, and it is the market leader in the US in financing real estate trusts. Its weakness is fixed-interest bonds.

A month ago NatWest bought a small US corporate finance boutique, Gleacher & Co, for \$135 million to beef up its corporate advisory business. "To optimise the profits from our equities business, we need more of primary business flow, such as new and secondary share issues," says Mr Hall. "Before Gleacher, we didn't have an effective executive capability. Now we're seeing a significant new deal flow."

The purchase of another smallish corporate finance operation remains likely, although NWM may build its corporate finance team by cherry-picking individuals from other firms.

Another key area that NatWest is likely to target is investment management. Growing organically in this field, particularly for a foreign institution, would be considerably more difficult than buying a US fund management firm. Moreover, NWM is likely to move fast. The move towards consolidation into a few global investment banks is gathering pace. "In the game being played out in the international capital markets, time is of the essence," Mr Hall says. "Anyone who doesn't follow through their strategy with determination risks being marginalised."

To some observers in America that is already happening to BZW, once the strongest of the big UK banks in America. And since its virtual collapse and takeover by Swiss Bank Corporation this year, SBC Warburg's strong showing on Wall Street appears to have faded.

This leaves NWM as the emerging British front-runner. NatWest's strategy, however, is fraught with dangers. To become a leading investment bank will be a complex and expensive process. NWM is probably correct in thinking that the investment banking universe is shrinking to a few globally powerful firms. Time will tell if it succeeds in becoming one of them.

There is no point being in global banking's second tier

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Legal & General

Telecoms regulator's crossed lines

From Sir Kenneth Warren Sir, The grand title of the telecommunications regulator, Mr Donald Cruickshank, is "The Director-General of Telecommunications". From his recent edicts, he appears to believe that therefore his job is to run the telecom services in the United Kingdom. Why else could he believe that he can require British Telecom to warn its competitors, in good time, so that they can counter new services BT wants to launch (December 22)?

Surely, the civil servants in the Department of Trade and Industry did not give Mr Cruickshank to understand this was to be his remit so that, indirectly, they could still meddle, post-privatisation?

To aid his cause, Mr Cruickshank has rallied three Acts of Parliament. To one of these I commend his careful attention, the Act which set up his office, in which he will find that his principal duty is to act as a catalyst to look after the public as customers. Regulators are not "responsible to no one", as one of his fellow

regulators stated recently. All are responsible to defined Secretaries of State, who are, in turn, responsible to Parliament.

Thus to push his plans before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would be an unwarranted nonsense as the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry would be forced to be judge of both the result of the inquiry and the actions of his appointee.

BT may not have acted with sound political wisdom at home in 1995, but in my experience abroad none of its competitors from other countries has to face competition from their own Regulators seeking to determine their world-wide marketing potential.

BT's customers, employees and shareholders must not be subjected to such stupidity. Over to the Secretary of State and Parliament! Yours faithfully, KENNETH WARREN, Woodfield House, Goudhurst, Cranbrook, Kent.

No evidence of British Gas chief misleading committee

From Mr Peter Sanguinetti Sir, Mr Falconer (Business Letters, December 22) is entitled to his opinion on British Gas. But he cannot be permitted to justify it on the basis of errors of fact.

British Gas's chief executive did not mislead the select committee. Each question raised by the committee was answered fully and frankly in writing and verbally before and during both hearings. Mr Falconer should read the committee's report. He will find no

evidence of the committee being misled. On British Gas long-term contracts, the following facts may assist him. Fifty-five per cent of these contracts were signed before 1986 with a statutory monopoly and a legal obligation to supply the market up to 25,000 tonnes, specified in the Offer for Sale prospectus as lasting for 25 years, that is to 2011.

Ninety-seven per cent were signed before the President of the Board of Trade announced immediately following the share capital consolidation should be as close as practicable to the value each existing Southern Electric share would have had prior to the payment of the special dividend (in each case after excluding the value of the NGG distribution), and the proportion of the issued share capital of the company held by each shareholder following the share capital consolidation

should be, as far as practicable, remain the same. Other than in respect of its nominal value, which will change from 50p to 53p, a new electric share will carry the same rights as an existing Southern Electric share.

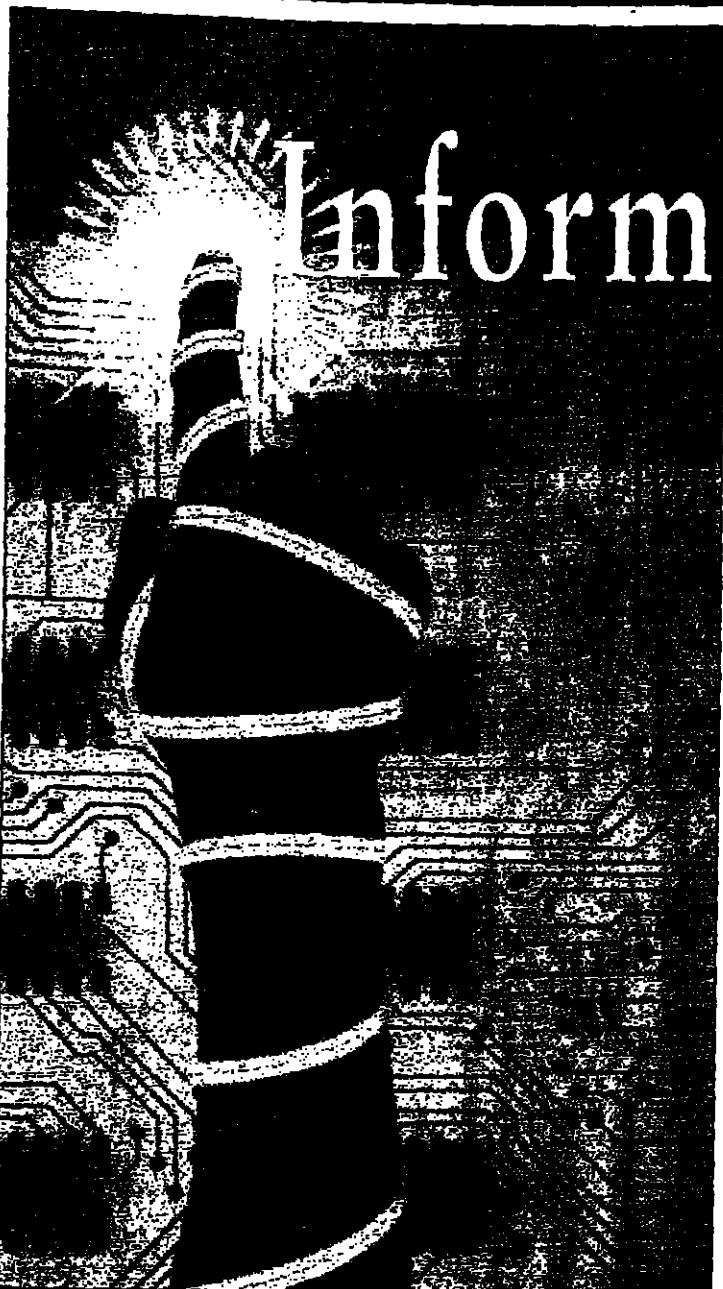
Such should not be allowed to blush unseen. Yours faithfully, GEOFFREY N. DENCE, The Firs, East Grimstead, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

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APPOINTMENTS

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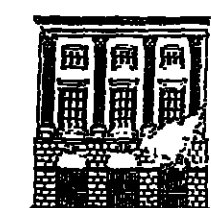
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■ FILM 1

A child and a lost banknote are the main items in a heart-warming Iranian movie, *The White Balloon*



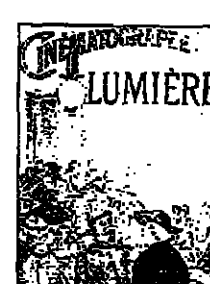
■ FILM 2

... while the life and awakening love of a pizza chef provide the material for the intriguing *Heavy*



■ FILM 3

Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom* is one of Geoff Brown's movies of the year



■ FILM 4

On this day, 100 years ago, the Lumière brothers opened the world's first paying cinema

RADIO

Only one box had vision

TALK about a season of comfort and joy. The phrase might have been composed for radio types at Christmas, a time when we are prone to a superior sniff through the television listings in search of reasons to cry, bah, humbug! Phrases such as "a feature-length episode of..." and "a special Christmas edition of..." litter the listings like pine needles, proving that television is a wasteland of unoriginal programming.

Whereas radio... radio on Christmas Day, to take a first instance, behaves as if intelligent life were still functioning. Radio 4 even has bulletins read by proper newscasters. All right, I don't know what happened to the news editors. On Christmas morning the news was led by the Royal Family gathering without Princess Di, followed by half of Scotland being buried under snow. Southeastern bias? You said it.

But then came real programmes. Lashings of *Ginger Beer* at 10am was a gem in which children sampled the fare in children's books. After that, the Beeb even had the nerve to start a new series, *Walters' Festive Frolics*, in which John Walters took all the standard requirements of Christmas to Majorca only to find that Majorca had them on sale already.

And so on and so forth. The evening highlights were a terrific production of *Private Lives* starring Imogen Stubbs and a surreal 15 minutes of Spike Milligan poetry in *Spike's Fleas, Knees and Hidden Elephants*.

The point about these programmes is that they are not for the most part, predictable. The point about their television equivalents is that they are. I know that in television the stakes are higher, that risk-taking could amount to job-risking. And, yes, I know that BBC2 and Channel 4, the so-called minority channels, do go for originality. But who decided that sit-com, film, sitcom, film, film was the only scheduling rhythm we would dance to?

What radio proves every Christmas is that television would do us all, and itself, a favour if it took a few chances.

PETER BARNARD

Geoff Brown on new films and the pick of '95. Plus the Lumières' big day, a century ago

Mesmerised by simple sights

One hundred years ago to the day, cinema started its life as a regular spectacle for paying customers (see *David Robinson*, below). In the intervening century it has grown into the world's most pervasive medium for art and entertainment. It can inspire and embody dreams like no other. It can also flatten people's sensibilities and make the globe look like Hollywood's backyard.

Technology has taken cinema far beyond the boundaries faced by the early pioneers. But once in a while, a film comes along so simple and direct in its appeal that you feel something of the amazement that must have struck the Lumière brothers' first patrons. A film, in fact, like Jafar Panahi's *The White Balloon*.

This small but mesmerising work hails from Iran, although it should appeal to people from any country where children are children and banknotes can disappear between the slats of a pavement grating. Seven-year-old Razieh badgers her mother into giving her money to buy a plump, pretty goldfish with dancing fins for the new year celebrations on the first day of spring. A few steps outside her home, she almost loses the money to snake-charmers. The note then drops on to the pavement, to be blown down the grating by a motorbike's exhaust. With the help of rods, chewing gum and passing adults, can Razieh retrieve her money before the pet shop shuts for the long new year holiday?

Panahi's prizewinning first film unfolds in real time, so we soon come to share the girl's struggles and fears, touchingly played out on Aida Mohammadkhani's sullen face. A protégé of Abbas Kiarostami, one of cinema's most humane directors (and the deviser of the film's script), Panahi already displays the master's knack of handling amateur actors and distilling the poetic essence from daily life.

The camera adeptly follows the girl and her banknote through Tehran's shady alleyways and bustling streets; but it excels even more at standing still, patiently watching the drama unfold, just like Lumière's cinematographe. In one particularly delicious scene, a lonely soldier on leave



The sands of time are slipping away fast as little Razieh (Aida Mohammadkhani) struggles to retrieve her lost banknote in *The White Balloon*

The White Balloon
Renoir, U. 85 mins
Simple and touching gem from Iran

Heavy
MGM Haymarket, 15, 104 mins
Slow but absorbing American indie

joins Razieh in her vigil by the grating. He sits, starts talking and offers a sweet. She looks wary, primly spreads out her skirt and fiddles with her fingers, anxious for help but mindful of warnings about meeting strangers.

Moral questions keep poking through the girl's adventures. She should not have stopped at the snake-charmers, a kindly woman says. Razieh knows, but "I wanted to see what was not good for me". When the same woman says she will mollify Razieh's mother by explaining that it was not her fault the banknote was lost, Razieh asks plaintively: "Whose fault is it?"

But Panahi and Kiarostami's human understanding prevents them blaming anybody. All - harassed shopkeepers, a young Afghan balloon seller, Razieh's father snapping orders off-screen - are embraced for what they are: faults, virtues, the whole bundle. Finding a film with such a generous heart and simple beauty, we can face our own new year torments.

Heavy is another antidote to most new releases. This is an American independent film, a first feature by James Mangold. But there is no pastiche, no flashing of guns and hard-boiled dialogue, no itch to be the new *Tarantino*. The pace is slow, at times almost painfully so. And Pruitt Taylor Vince's central character, Victor, pizza chef at Pete and Dolly's Restaurant, a truckstop dump in upstate New York, lacks all glamour. He is fat and imprisoned by

intense shyness: instead of talking, he nervously observes the world through hurt, roving eyes. To add to his handicaps, his domineering mother Dolly - Pete is long gone - is played by Shelley Winters.

As it happens, Winters is not quite the drawback that observers of her later career might expect. Mangold has tamed the appetite for chewing scenery. This is a low-key film, and Winters's querulous bleatings slot into place in a chamber symphony of conflicting voices. There is Callie, the aimless college dropout played by 17-year-old Liv Tyler (a name to watch), who gets work at Pete and Dolly's and stirs Victor's dormant passions. There is Delores, the world-weary waitress: a good role for the tarnished beauty of former pop icon Deborah Harry. Aside from Victor, two other men hang around the women: a bar fly and a garage mechanic. Uninterested in complicated plot mechanics, Mangold simply lets these forlorn people rub against each other and watches the ripples spread when the un-

easy calm of Victor's life is disturbed. Mangold came to his feature debut after a frustrating brush with Hollywood. A student film secured him a one-year stint at Disney, where he was removed from directing a television film and helped to turn *Oliver Twist* into a meandering, forgotten canine cartoon, *Oliver and Company*. Fingers burnt, he retreated to film school and developed *Heavy* under Milos Forman's guidance at Columbia University in New York.

Like Forman's early Czech films, *Heavy* empathises with its vulnerable characters. But Mangold ploughs his own furrow. It is a narrow one at the moment, and he is taking risks by asking modern audiences to accept a drama without obvious thrills: often, indeed, without dialogue. But patience brings its rewards, and anyone not immobilised by Christmas pud should find refreshment in the film's calmness and sensitivity.

If *Heavy* sounds too gloomy for the festive season, you can always amuse yourself by trying to construct a 1995 Top Ten film list. The year may have been short on outstanding achievements, but a sizeable number of stimulating films still passed by. Few came from mainstream Hollywood, although *Little Women* worked wonders with Louisa May Alcott, and *Nobody's Fool*, Robert Benton's slice of small-town Americana, deserved far wider exposure.

Otherwise, this was the year of the mavericks. Tim Burton

made *Ed Wood*, a moving and uproarious tribute to the man crowned the world's worst film director. Edward D. Wood Jr. Bryan Singer leapt to new prominence with *The Usual Suspects*, a fiendishly scripted crime thriller. Gus Van Sant bounced back with *To Die For*. Tom DiCillo returned with *Living in Oblivion*. And in *Hoop Dreams*, Steve James, Fred Marx and Peter Gilbert produced a documentary film with the breadth and detail of that elusive beast, the Great American Novel.

Luckily there is more to life than Schwarzenegger's muscles or Kevin Costner's ego, although increasingly you need to live close to London to discover this. The best foreign films not showing at your local Odeon included Zhou Xiaowen's *Ermo*, Wong Kar-wai's *Chungking Express* and Aki Kaurismäki's *Take Care of Your Scarf, Tatjana*. Intense pleasures have also come from Tunisia (*The Silences of the Palace*), Iceland (*Cold Fever*) and Italy (Michael Radford's *Il Postino*). From the Antipodes came two contrasting delights: *Babe* and Peter Jackson's impressively mature *Heavenly Creatures*.

The saddest aspect of the year's moviegoing has been the vacuum at the centre. We desperately need good popular films that entertain without playing down to audiences, that move beyond bloated special effects and pop-video frenzy, films that believe in people and stories and life itself. Too often film-makers and audiences sell themselves

CONCERT

Viols in winter

Fretwork
St John's

THE title of Fretwork's "Wild Winter" programme was taken from the main item in the programme, the first London performance of Thea Musgrave's *Wild Winter*. Fretwork has actively sought works by living composers who have found inspiration in the sound world of the viol consort.

Musgrave's work is based on a mosaic of text, from wide-ranging sources and in different languages. The title and main theme are drawn from Wilfred Owen's 1914 extracts from which form the prologue, reprise and coda to the piece, interspersed with a series of lamentations on the savagery and destruction of war.

A vocal quartet (Lisa Tyrell, Paul Agnew, Andrew Murgatroyd and Colin Campbell) are supported and complemented by the viols in discordant accompaniments and dramatic interjections that boast wild harmonies.

While the Musgrave is an extended, at times impenetrable, piece, Sally Beamish's *In Dreaming*, a setting of Caliban's speech from Act III of *The Tempest*, is an atmospheric but detailed miniature. Tenor Paul Agnew and Fretwork gave a superb account of a brilliantly conceived work that builds on musical allusions to Tippett and Purcell.

This was all the Purcell we were allowed, however. All year Fretwork has championed the music of William Lawes, one of Purcell's immediate predecessors. Both the *Consort Set* a 5 in G minor and his poignant tribute to his friend and colleague John Tomkins, *Musick, the Master of the Art is dead*, are masterpieces, the consort revealing an imagination that called for light playing from Fretwork, the lament full of searing but controlled dissonances. Consort music by Gibbons and Jenkins completed a rewarding programme.

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The reel anniversary, probably

In a Paris cellar on December 28, 1895, cinema was born. Or was it?

By common consent rather than historical justification, today marks the official centenary of the motion picture. On December 28 1895 the Lumière cinematographe went on show to a paying public in a basement below the Grand Café in the Boulevard des Capucines, Paris.

The 30 or so people who bought tickets and joined the invited guests descended a narrow staircase and pushed their way through velvet curtains to the Salon Indien, a small room with a hundred café chairs placed in rows in front of a white screen. Behind them, the cinematographe, a neat little machine which could serve as camera and projector, was mounted on a wooden trestle and screened by curtains, as much to drown its sewing-machine racket as to conceal its technical secrets.

The show lasted less than 20 minutes with ten one-shot films. The audience was thrilled to see photographs in movement: workers leaving the Lumière factory, traffic in the streets, waves splashing

against a pier. Within a week, police were needed to control the queues. Soon, more than 2,000 people a day were paying one franc to see the cinematographe. The only loser was the landlord of the Salon Indien, who had cautiously insisted on a rental of Fr30 a day rather than the 20 per cent of the receipts the Lumières proposed.

Remarkably, neither Louis Lumière, the inventor of the cinematographe, nor Auguste, his brother and collaborator, was in Paris for this historic premiere. The shows were entirely the idea of their father, Antoine. Louis wrote to the engineer who made the machine: "My father tormented us with wanting to give shows in Paris, but we have decided to keep out of it."

The serious-minded Louis and Auguste saw their cinematographe as an interesting scientific advance. Antoine, bon viveur and friend of

music-hall artists, must take credit for being the first to see the entertainment potential of movies.

The Lumières, however, were not the first to make moving photographs: the Edison Kinetoscope had achieved that in 1893, though the pictures were seen by individual viewers in a peepshow device, not projected onto a screen. Throughout 1895 many other inventors in America and Europe were experimenting with machines to project the Kinetoscope images. The cinematographe itself was patented ten months before the December 28 show, during which time the Lumières had already given demonstrations for photographic and other societies.

Nor, as is often claimed, was the Lumières' December show the first before a paying audience. In May 1895 there were public film projections on Broadway, New York; and on

November 1 the Skladanowsky Brothers showed their Bioscop projector at the Wintergarten, Berlin. The results may have been less satisfactory than the cinematographe; but the public came, paid and marvelled.

So why do we celebrate the Lumières and December 28? Perhaps because the French are better at commemorating national glories. Already in 1925 and 1935 they enthusiastically celebrated the 30th and 40th anniversaries of the cinematographe. The Government formally dissociated itself from the 50th, however, since the Lumière brothers had disgraced themselves during the war that had then just ended: Louis was decorated by the Vichy government, while Auguste was a member of the notorious collaborationist Legion Volontaire Française. These indiscretions led to the abandonment of their portrait on a French banknote this year. Just the same, the world continues to commemorate Antoine's lucky show.

DAVID ROBINSON



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Andrei Navrozov urges caution as KGB archives reveal the full extent of Stalin's manipulation of the intelligentsia

By any criterion this book is an event in the historiography of world culture. The value of the extensive research, which it abstracts, into the literary biographies of Russia's martyred writers is quite absolute and impossible to misinterpret. Yet like the unprecedented research itself, the publication of these literary discoveries is a political event as well, and one whose significance in today's world is far more ambivalent.

Circumspect and selective as the opening of KGB archives to scholars has been, in the West it has been greeted with a fundamentalist enthusiasm that is often based on sheer semantics: the opening of a Lubyanka file is akin to the opening of a Moscow McDonald's. For the native sceptic who wishes to caution the West not to fall for spurious analogies, the abiding difficulty is that just as fast food is indeed

The strange death of literary Russia

fast, so each newly opened file is indisputably an eye-opener.

For the generations of Russians brought up on clandestine readings of forbidden or neglected writers, everything miraculously preserved in the time capsule to which the author's "Commission for the Literary Legacy of Writer-Victims of the Repressions" were given access in 1988 is a revelation, be it a lost variant of a Mandelstam poem or the last photograph of Nikolai Klyuev. But the time capsule has yielded more than mementoes and epiphanies. Entire works, such as Klyuev's epic *Song of the Great Mother* and Andrei Platonov's *Technical Novel*, have now been exhumed and published.

Of still more universal interest is the historical aspect of the commission's haul. Most scholars, both Russian and in the West, have continued to treat the Stalin era in ways made acceptable by Khrushchev during the political spring which he brought about as the requisite climate for his struggle for power. It is only now, for instance, as John Crowfoot concides in a note to this book, that "Khrushchev's personal approval in 1962 for the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*" can be seen for what it was, "a striking instance of the manipulation of literature for political purposes". As Khrushchev's reputation as a disinterested re-

THE KGB'S LITERARY ARCHIVE
The Discovery of the Ultimate Fate of Russia's Suppressed Writers
By Vitaly Shentalinsky
Harvill, £18

former undergoes revision, so the precepts of historical analysis he foisted on historians with respect to Stalin begin to crumble.

The consensus has been that Stalin was a bloodthirsty maniac who played hit-and-miss with his foreign policy as irrationally as he gambled with the lives of millions

at home. Yet so long as the pursuit of earthly power is acknowledged as a rational aim, Stalin's 30-year quest for global power must mark him as one of the truly innovative empire-builders of all time. That this modern Caesar nearly drowned Russia and half the world in blood during those years should not blind historians to the utterly rational and supremely shrewd stratagems he employed in the prosecution of his personal goal.

This volume offers fresh reminders of Stalin's skill at outfoxing intellectuals. When Maxim Gorky, whom Stalin used as the engine for the Union of Soviet Writers propaganda machine, had to be drawn to Moscow from his Sorrento villa, a

special home for delinquent children was set up in Russia to correspond with him. "For each of my letters I receive 22 from them," marvelled the touched writer. A few years later the secret police, out of concern for the old man's peace of mind, would print single copies of national newspapers for him.

As the episode of Stalin's 1932 postanovleniye o perestroike (Decree on Restructuring) illustrates, he played the intelligentsia like a fiddle. Oppressed during the preceding 15 years of Bolshevik rule, the intellectuals, he had calculated, would run to him for protection. The KGB archives show that only a few, notably Mandelstam, demurred. The rest, from Pasternak to

Prokofiev, seized the "new freedom" they thought was on offer. The stage was set for the 1935 Paris "anti-fascist congress of writers", whereupon "all progressive mankind" allied itself with Moscow.

It remains to be seen whether Gorbachev's perestroika and the subsequent "fall of Communism" — with which the careful "new openness" of the KGB elite is politically linked — owe more to the spirit of Stalinist deceptions than today's intellectuals would care to concede. Do historians understand Gorbachev's motives any better than they did Khrushchev's? What new empires are contemplated by Russia's future rulers with the help of their conscience-stricken, yet ever burgeoning, secret police?

Andrei Navrozov has just completed a biography of Boris Pasternak.

Tales told by an idiot of genius

Dostoevsky's life changed when in 1845, beginning *Crime and Punishment* but still virtually unknown, he proposed to his stenographer Anna Snitkina. At 20, she took on one of the world's most difficult men. A few years later, he would say, prostrating his 44-year-old body at her feet. He neglected her and he gambled. Almost immediately they fled Russia for Wiesbaden to escape his creditors. The intended brief stay turned into six years of peripatetic isolation and homesickness in Germany and Switzerland. The miracle of these stretched years is that, between bouts of epilepsy, and despite the death of their first child, he went on writing. By day he read the Russian press in cafés. By night, he finished *Crime and Punishment*, wrote *The Idiot* and began *The Devils*. In between came two great novels, *The Gambler* and *The Eternal Husband*.

The Dostoevskys, desperate to return home, finally did so in 1851 to spiralling fame. In 1873 he began writing a column in a journal, *The Citizen*, and three years later began a one-man monthly review, *A Writer's Diary*, which exerted an immense influence on public opinion until his death in 1881. The

Diary was halted for two years while he wrote his final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and the two works share many themes.

The novels are more accurately compendiums of flash-lit dramatic scenes; their single obsession authenticity. Human actions shadow and echo one another. Characters spout the same sentiments with vastly different moral incentives. Some seem to know truth by divination, others follow the bandwagon of intellectual fashion. The quest for authenticity — and perhaps its essential impossibility — leads to absorbing "double" constructions and devious polyphonies. It proceeds in one man's heart in *Crime and Punishment*, becomes a social problem in *The Idiot* and a political one in *The Devils*. The two characteristic factors, poverty and a study of the law, which encourage Raskolnikov to juggle free will and moral responsibility at the expense of an old woman's life, hang over an oeuvre obsessed with crime, and ultimately the crime of murder.

The first complete English edition of *A Writer's Diary* has now been translated by Kenneth Lantz. Its editor, Gary Saul Morson, emphasises that Dostoevsky was both the chronicler of abysmal



Group portrait of writers (1920), from *The Salon Album of Vera Sudeikin-Stravinsky* (Princeton, £50), a palimpsest of St Petersburg. The artist, Sergei Gorodetsky, sits in front. Left to right: Valerii Briusov, Fedor Sologub, Alexei Remizov, Viacheslav Ivanov, Alexander Blok, Mikhail Kuzmin, Andrei Bely, Konstantin Balmont

spiritual travails and a character suffering them. His novels show the disastrous consequences of putting an absolute theory into practice and believing in one thing or nothing. *A Writer's Diary*, though it was a useful vehicle for fiction and comment, found its true popular character when Dostoevsky sounded off as a national prophet, decrying foreigners and Jews. He hailed Russia, embroiled in Balkan wars, as successor to Imperial Rome and Byzantium.

For many years *A Writer's Diary* has been an embarrassment to Dostoevsky studies. Frank reminds us of a famous quarrel Dostoevsky

had some years earlier in Baden-Baden with Turgenev over whether fanaticism was a necessary characteristic of a Russian writer. Turgenev was pilloried in *The Devils* for his "18th-century" moderation.

So the aesthetic and moral and national strands of Dostoevsky's difficult oeuvre weave together. There is a desperate casting about for non-utilitarian values which would be at once Christian and Russian and respect the unpredictability of human nature and the accidental quality of material events. It becomes impossible to judge crime. In the *Diary* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky

richochets between praising individual responsibility and dismissing the guilt of premeditated crime: for how can a man know when he picks up a potential weapon that his aim is to commit murder?

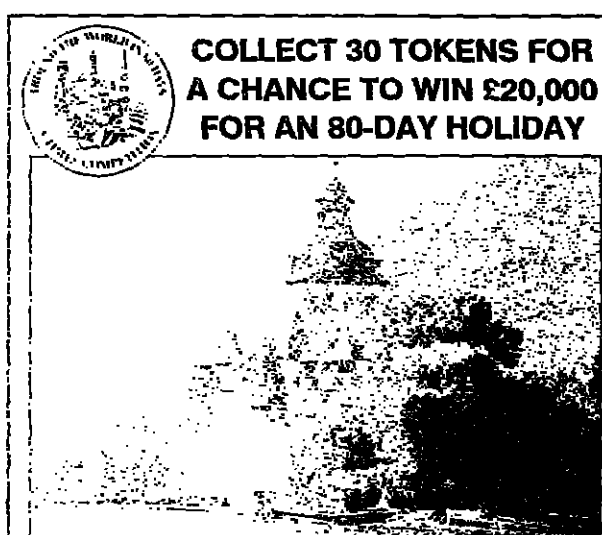
This is what post-modern Christianity will look like, surely. Dostoevsky is an alarming prophet of Western chaos: to me, his world view spells deep moral trouble, which his art does not enlighten. I disagree with Frank that its power is universal and undiminished. But I accept Frank's view that Dostoevsky's craving for Christian

love proceeded from the deep disturbance of the mock execution he faced as a young man, and his subsequent hard labour in Siberia. Prince Myshkin, the "Idiot", observed that a condemned man lost even the dignity of struggling for life. Dostoevsky's sense of dignity was probably never restored.

In its place came furious assertions of "free will". The desperate desire to gamble in casino and cosmos also had an erotic tinge. Frank thinks Dostoevsky may have been impotent with Apollinaria Suslova, the mistress before Snitkina who inspired the fiery Nastasya Filippovna in *The Idiot*.

You have to read Dostoevsky, alas. Nietzsche and Freud, Conrad and Virginia Woolf all did. He is the genius who has done most to illumine 19th-century Russian psychology and to make the terrifying problems of atheism and nihilism part of the modernism we still grapple with. Frank's magisterial five-volume study of his life and work, of which this is the fourth, salutes the grandeur of Dostoevsky's project, his devastating exposure of the intellectual debate tugging at the roots of Judeo-Christian morality, and his imaginative power of elevating social realism to a tragic plane.

NEW YEAR WEEKEND BOOKS: Helen Dunmore on Peter Hoeg Plus: 1995's bestsellers — who did well and why?



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Scavengers for the sublime

We are so used to the idea of Old Master paintings as a prime commodity, enshrined in public galleries or fought over in the saleroom, that it comes as a surprise to learn that this high status and the activity itself of collecting old paintings dates back not much further than the beginning of the 17th century.

Before that era, the collecting of old art objects and the prestige it conferred on the owner was largely confined to Greek and Roman sculpture, coins and medals. Vast accumulations of old paintings built up over generations in churches, monasteries and palaces, particularly in Italy. But these had been ordered new, directly from the artist, and it is this that distinguishes patronage as an activity from collecting.

The idea that one individual could in the space of a few years form by purchase a collection of hundreds of choice paintings by the most famous artists and display them in a gallery context seems to have been pioneered in England by Charles I and a handful of intimates known as the Whitehall Group. They had opportunities to buy quality in bulk that had never existed before, mainly because of the political and economic decline of the Italian states. Buying the best pictures on this scale was chiefly for princes and great noblemen.

Yet for much of the century prices were lower than for many other luxury items. It is an eye-opener to learn from this book, which is based on Jonathan Brown's Mellon lectures at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, that Charles I's sister, Princess Elizabeth, owned a court dress, the gold and silver lace on which was worth more than any but the most expensive canvases by Raphael or Titian in his collection.

As Prince of Wales, Charles had before him the example of Lord Arundel, who collected Italian paintings with the

same care and discernment that he brought to buying Classical sculpture. But Professor Brown suggests that Charles was more influenced by the fast-moving acquisitiveness and flashy taste of his father's young favourite, the Duke of Buckingham. In the half-dozen years before his murder in 1628, Buckingham filled his London house with more than 400 paintings, including Titian's great *Ecc Homo*. Among those that got away from this insatiably acquisitive man was the *Mona Lisa*, which Louis XIII refused him as a memento of a trip to Paris.

The upwardly mobile Buckingham bought Old Masters

Marc Jordan

KINGS AND CONNOISSEURS
Collecting Art in 17th-century Europe
By Jonathan Brown
Yale, £35

to flaunt his new wealth and social status. For Charles, collecting was an integral part of the magnificence that went with 17th-century kingship. It was also a genuine passion: he shone in art politics as he never did in the real thing. He got off to a good start in 1623 when he persuaded Philip IV of Spain to give him Titian's *Pardo Venus* and *Charles V with a Hound*. But, as Brown drolly points out, Philip could spare them, having inherited the largest group of works by Titian ever owned by a single individual.

Charles also bought on an unprecedented scale, most significantly in 1627, when he spent £10,000 on the bulk of the collection of the impoverished Gonzaga Dukes of Mantua, who had been patrons of Mantegna, Raphael, Giulio Romano, Correggio and Titian. He found himself the owner of a hoard that included Titian's *Entombment*, Raphael's *Holy Family* ("La Perla"),

Correggio's *Education of Cupid* and Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*.

The English Civil War brought an end to the legendary collections of Charles I and his circle. Under the Commonwealth the royal collection was put up for sale to pay the Crown's debts, and through-out the 1630s the surviving members of the Whitehall Group or their heirs also sold off their art works in order to live. England's loss brought huge benefits to princely collectors elsewhere in Europe, and Brown's story continues with studies of the courts of Spain, France and Flanders. Not even in the aftermath of the French Revolution was such a quantity of Old Masters released onto the market in such a short space of time: the sale of Charles I's collection alone put 1,570 pictures into circulation.

The chief beneficiary of this diaspora was Philip IV of Spain. With the advice of Velázquez and the discreet operations of his ambassador in London, he creamed off the best of the pictures, thereby contributing to the rapid growth of a collection that was by inheritance and accumulation already the biggest and best in Europe. The other major collector of the later 17th century, Archduke Leopold William of Austria (Governor of the Spanish Netherlands), swallowed up wholesale the best paintings belonging to the heirs of the Dukes of Buckingham and Hamilton, nearly 400 in all, the latter including Giorgione's *Three Philosophers* and Tintoretto's *Susannah and the Elders*. Equally avid, but not quite in the same league, was Cardinal Mazarin of France, though he did buy the *Pardo Venus* and Correggio's *Venus, Cupid and Psyche*.

Alongside the princes and magnates, Brown introduces us to a whole sub-culture of experts and dealers, pawn-brokers, go-betweens, restor-



Anthony Van Dyck's portrait of Charles I hunting (1635) was sold after the Civil War and is now in the Louvre

ers and fakers — the distant ancestors of the modern art trade. Among them are Sir Dudley Carleton, much-put-upon English Ambassador to Venice, forced into the art trade when left with an unpaid-for consignment of pictures on his hands after the fall from grace of the Earl of Somerset and Balthasar Gerbier, the dubious ex-painter and self-styled expert who helped to form Buckingham's collection; the ubiquitous Daniel Nys, a Flemish dealer who negotiated the Gonzaga purchase for Charles I, then ruined himself in an attempt to play off the King of England, the Queen of France and the Holy Roman Emperor

against one another; and the fabulously rich Paris banker Everhard Jabach, who sold his collection to Louis XIV and was later accused by a rival of trafficking in fakes.

This is an important book for anyone who is interested in the interaction of art, politics and the marketplace, the appetite of collectors and the ingenuity of dealers, or even just in the curious migrations of masterpieces. And, being American, the author is mercifully free from any sentimental regrets that most of the best of the Whitehall Group's pictures now grace the Prado, the Louvre and Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, instead of the National Gallery.

Piebald but still a nation

"We are a nation of parvenus," Lewis Lapham writes of America. "A mixed and piebald company." This is just as true now as it was in the 17th century, when a country that scarcely imagined it might become a nation arose in what was called the New World.

Lewis Lapham's analysis of that nation has been entertaining and enlightening his fellow citizens for many years. As editor of the monthly *Harper's Magazine*, he casts a baleful eye across the cultural plain, offering up his often witty and sometimes scathing opinions. His latest collection of essays, *Hotel America: Scenes in the Lobby of the Fin-de-Siècle* (Verso, £19.95), is a disturbing portrait of a nation in fear of its ambiguous future.

WITH the end of the Cold War, Lapham says, America was no longer able to view itself as a star shining out against the dark background of communism. Turning to its own ills — it's the economy, stupid — has given rise to a culture of blame. Lapham points out that the present's idea of the past is a simplification: too true democracy "isn't supposed to be easy".

Lapham's portraits of his country are astute, and his dry wit is as sharp as a knife. He is not unbiased, but he has little time for the certainties of either Left or Right.

The subject matter of some of these essays — the details of the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill case, or Whitewater — might at first strike the British reader as obscure. But as portraits of democracy in decline, there is nothing obscure about them. Whatever the qualities of American civilisation, there is no doubting its influence, and Lapham is among its wisest interpreters.

ERICA WAGNER

Lost rhymes by the parson of Grimes

John Bayley hails a major poet's rediscovered story in verse of a girl's infanticide and feigned madness

The strain of living in an age of reason and of literary decorum made some of the most talented 18th-century English poets if not positively mad, then at least highly unconventional in the ways they lived and wrote. However different they are from each other, Blake, Cowper, Collins and Christopher Smart certainly share this ability to disconcert the reader: and these were modes of poetic utterance which were far from fashionable at the time.

George Crabbe (1754-1832) is not like that. As rational as the next man in powdered wig and breeches, a down-to-earth satirist and grim social observer, his only form of excess was the opium habit; and that was so common and so well-concealed in the polite society of the time that not many of his acquaintances became aware of it. But his wife went mad; he failed to get the preferment that was his due; and he lived a sombre life in his rural Norfolk parish, comforted by the practice of writing verses about the harsh and struggling lives that he observed around him.

"I sing the cot / As truth will have it and as bards will not", he claimed in one of his characteristically dry and forceful couplets. *Peter Grimes*, written like the rest in verse as orthodox but as descriptively vivid as Pope's, is the most famous, as it is the most powerful, of the tales that make up *The Borough*. For Crabbe did achieve fame of a sort, even in his lifetime. Dr Johnson approved of him; he influenced Wordsworth and the other Romantics; he was respected by Byron, who twice commends him in his own poetry. Jane Austen says in a letter that she would have liked him for a husband. She was being flippant, no doubt, for it is hard to imagine her being married to anyone, let alone Crabbe, but it shows how highly she prized an intellect and a sensibility which, in its powers of dramatising daily life, was not so very different from her own.

Crabbe got to know Sarah Hoare, bluestocking daughter of a rich Quaker banker who lived in Hampstead. Hoare knew all the poets of the age as well as the politicians; and Sarah and her stepmother appointed themselves as nurses and muses to Crabbe.

THE VOLUNTARY INSANE

By George Crabbe
Richard Cohen, £12.99

cheering the parson poet and judging the compositions he submitted to their scrutiny. At their house he met Wilberforce, Maria Edgeworth, Mrs Siddons, and other luminaries; Wordsworth too visited the Hoares when he was in London.

Sarah may well have kept manuscripts of Crabbe which she and her fellow judges did not consider quite the thing, as Jane Austen would say. Among these unpublished survivals in the

by, this may have been because she thought it below the poet's usual standard, as well as for the reasons suggested by its discoverer: possible shockiness, and indiscretion where Crabbe's wife was concerned.

In his narrative of an unfortunate girl who lets herself deliberately decline into madness after a baby in her care has died, Crabbe is in fact more earnest and pious than shocking. The metre does not suit him, and the words lack the sardonic grip, the visionary intensity and grim humour of his best work in couplets.

On the other hand, as the editor rightly suggests, the subject itself has a clinical fascination for modern ears, as have the autobiographical implications. Crabbe's wife appears to have exhibited much the same symptoms as the poor girl in the poem, perhaps for the same reason: four of her six children died young, and she may have affected madness as a shield against guilt or blame. No wonder Crabbe's benefactress thought it best, as well as more discreet, to lay the poem away in a drawer.

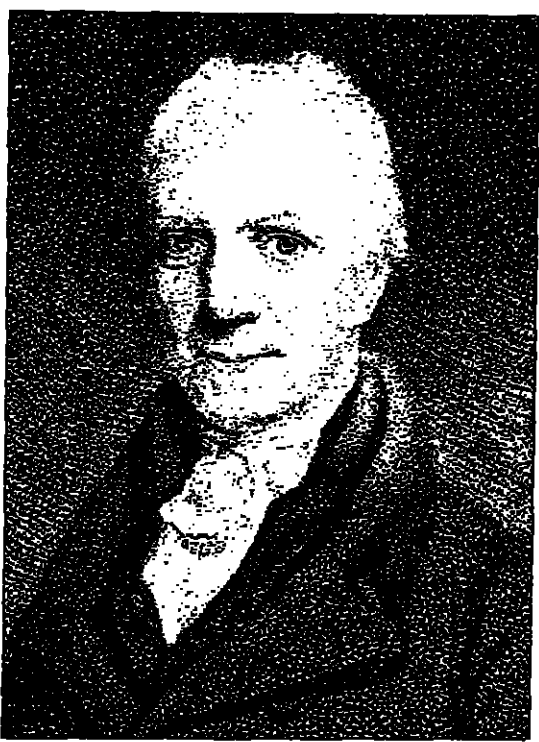
Yet it is certainly a work of considerable interest, not only for Crabbe-lovers; and it is presented here in a sensible and elegant edition. As poetry, its level can reasonably be appreciated by the final stanza.

*'Twas Eventide — the flocks were penned
And Shepherds whistled o'er the Lea;
But e'er that Summer Night had ended
The Maid was from Life's burden free.*

*Alone she died; no Eye could see
The Signs without of Thoughts within —
Judge not — thine own Temptation flee.
Nor parley with the Strength of Sin —*

Fluent rather than inspired — those whistling shepherds are all too conventional a property of the age — it nonetheless reveals Crabbe's keen and clinical eye for the sadness of things.

The more powerful section of the poem analyses the progress of the girl's malady, from natural kindness (hugging children "she seems to feel the Peace she makes") to harsh indifference. And this has all the sombre force of Crabbe at his best.



Crabbe: Jane Austen fancied him as a husband

Hoare Notebook is *The Voluntary Insane*, a long poem on the theme of madness, now edited by Felix Pryor, who engagingly describes himself as "earning my living by discovering manuscripts", and who is descended from Sarah Hoare's sister.

With the natural pride of a successful explorer, Pryor claims that this newfound poem is "George Crabbe's masterpiece". This is going rather too far. By contrast not only with such powerful narratives in *The Borough* as *Peter Grimes* and *Ellen Orford*, but also with Crabbe's other published "mad" poems like the vivid and hallucinatory *Sir Eustace Grey*, *The Voluntary Insane* seems to me commonplace enough. If, as seems possible, Sarah Hoare tactfully put it



Another Italian self-portrait: in 1924 Brancusi photographed himself at work on *Endless Column* in his studio (in Elizabeth Bowen's *Brancusi Photographs Brancusi*, Thames & Hudson, £12.95)

World-besotted sex tourist

Alain de Botton

USES AND ABUSES
By Aldo Busi
Translated by Stuart Hood
Faber, £4.99

READING Aldo Busi is akin to being cornered by a garrulous, egotistical, sarcastic, clever but often very funny man with an urgent wish to regale you with every detail of his recent trips abroad. Busi has travelled to most corners of the globe, apparently in order to write journalistic pieces about which we hear very little and cannot quite imagine. What we do hear about are Busi's feelings towards the countries he visits, which are largely negative ones, though never as negative as those he reserves for his native Italy. Interspersed with reportage are reminiscences of Busi's childhood, his thoughts on the meaning of life, and an explicit recollection of his homosexual exploits.

Busi must have generous employers, because he invariably gets to stay in the smartest hotel in town, always raids the mini-bar (he is very good on the topic), and does not seem to have much work to do. He gets sent to Reykjavik along with a photographer whom he hates, refuses to talk to and nicknames Candid-Camera. After spending most of his time in the

hotel or a nearby bar, he finally decides to interview the President of Iceland, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. Charmed by her, he skips all mention of politics. (Iceland has no problems anyway, judges Busi, not next to Italy), and asks her where she gets her clothes from. Paris, she answers, but begs him not to write this, since she has recently flattered a journalist from *Bunte* by telling him it was Germany.

Busi next goes off on a Latin American tour, which allows him to indulge his bleak satirical humour to the full. There are sketches of threatening drug barons, collapsing motorways, chaotic cities, incongruously luxurious hotels and appalling squalor and deprivation. Busi travels from Caracas to Bogotá, then to Brasília and Rio, all the while making the reader feel very

glad that he stayed home. Things improve somewhat when Busi goes off to Spain, which he likes, and Algeria, where he has lots of sex. Unfortunately, he then has to go off to South Korea to cover the Olympics, though he hates sport, and then Japan, where no one will talk to him, apart from a brief conversation he has with a Japanese man whom he has accidentally squirted with milk while preparing a cup of coffee on a Bullet Train.

BUSI'S PROSE style has an impatience, energy and bile that sometimes threaten to turn it into a rant. If he is ultimately saved from the charge, it is because he knows when to leave matters with an ironic touch. "I very much like melancholy persons," he tells us, "for the first five minutes. And I also like timid people — if they are not more than 15 years old."

Nevertheless, when we reach the end of *Uses and Abuses* we are likely to be exhausted and perhaps exasperated by Busi. Despite the book's many charms, it would be hard to recommend placing it too far up any reading list.

Counting cosmic visions

There was a country where they were all thieves.... Everybody robbed everybody else, until one day an honest man interrupted the cycle, throwing everything into disarray. Italo Calvino wrote *The Black Sheep* in 1943, when he was only 20, and yet as an Italian political allegory its relevance is untarnished. The style of such early pieces is blunt and naive in comparison to his later works; but their ironic moral tone, finely rendered by Tim Parks's translation, still hits the mark. "One writes fables in periods of oppression," he wrote. His predilection for this form lasted longer than Mussolini, as this collection demonstrates.

Numbers in the Dark includes short stories, dialogues and the beginnings of unfinished novels, gathered here for the first time. They span Calvino's entire writing career from 1943 to 1985. In the first section to 1958, covering his years as a Communist Party member, themes of politics and war dominate. *Becalmed in the Antilles* was written in 1957, the year he left the party over the invasion of Hungary, and it satirises the postwar deadlock between the Italian Communists and the Christian Demo-

Harriet Paterson

NUMBERS IN THE DARK

By Italo Calvino
Jonathan Cape, £15.99

crats as an encounter in a flat calm between Drake's fleet and the Spaniards. This story preserved its immediacy for a further 25 years.

This paring-down of intricate situations to the simplest kernel is the exact opposite of the later Calvino who ramifies, questions and complicates even the simplest gesture. Every action, however insignificant, generates infinite associations stretching back in time and space. Turning a tap or releasing a petrol pump diverts Calvino's intense narrative attention down to the subterranean strata from which the water or oil is being drawn. He has become a cosmic visionary, who sees a tree in every splinter of wood, the whole of human history in a lump of ice.

Logical conclusions give way to illogical extremes, an obsession with the *reductio ad absurdum* which can lead to a kind of madness, generating feelings of anxiety and vertigo in the reader. These are then compounded by the apocalyptic conclusions which issue forth from Calvino's notorious melancholy. In 1975 he sees a second ice age threatening, in 1976 the extinction of resources, in 1984 the galaxy imploding.

However, the author does not abandon his reader without offering a lifeline of control. He defies annihilation by writing ceaselessly, creating an inventory of the disappearing planet. This is the exact task of the characters in the 1968 story *World Memory* who must make "a catalogue of everything." The task is impossible but the principle is fortifying. "I've been getting used to imagining the future without flinching," Calvino writes. The precision and lucidity of his prose testify to his steady gaze.

From Welsh wizard to tweedy leftist don

Stephen Logan

RAYMOND WILLIAMS

By Fred Inglis
Routledge, £19.99

An only life may take so long to climb / clear of its wrong beginnings, and may never." Thus Philip Larkin, with the insight that made foresight sound like hindsight. Raymond Williams's beginnings were not wrong, except in the sense of suggesting possibilities which later life precludes. But, the loyalties and allegiances he formed during his working-class childhood in South Wales proved unusually hard to reconcile with the demands of his academic career. Consequently, he suffered from the anguish of inner exile.

He represented this, to others and, apparently, to himself, as a conflict between the wish to live in Wales and the need to work in Cambridge. (He kept homes in both places). The border country that his childhood home had occupied became for him a potent symbol of his state. He was torn — yet effortlessly poised — between two countries and two classes. The endless variety of socio-political phenomena were perpetually resolving themselves, within Williams's fanatic heart, into the elements of a personal conflict.

Williams was born in 1921. His father, Harry, was a railway signalman who became a union branch secretary. It is easy to see here the roots of Williams's romantic socialism. From his father also stems his diligence as a writer (more than 20 books of cultural commentary, seven novels, three plays, and several thousand newspaper articles).

His mother, by contrast, provided him with a pattern of

resignation, for on personal matters her husband was an unusually silent man. His decisions — as to the naming of their son, for instance — emerged from a dark private self to which verbal access was denied. As Fred Inglis observes, in a narrative at once acute, scholarly and informal: "Harry lived a deep contradiction between gregariousness and withdrawal which he taught his son." When Williams died in 1988, his death was announced on radio: his work evoked a public response beyond his academic circle.

Raymond Williams was an unusual academic, not least in being regularly described as a seer. There must have been many occasions during his lectures, when he did not have his eyes closed, his head thrown back and his words issuing forth in a steady, slightly mystifying meditative



Williams (left) with Frank Kermode, Cambridge 1981

torrent. Yet that is how he is remembered by many of those whose testimony is recorded in this vividly documented book — more biographical essay than biography.

Whether Williams actually was a seer, or only looked like one, depends in part on how we answer one question. What was it — among the things which some people count su-

premely valuable — that Williams is believed to have seen more clearly than most? Those who give an answer in terms of his relations with Marxism divide him from a broader readership. And there seems to me a peculiar inappropriateness in doing that: for one of the things that Williams undoubtedly saw was the inappropriateness of any form of public discourse — such as literary criticism — which complacently addresses itself solely to a closed social or professional coterie.

His sympathies were profoundly pro-democratic. If he differed, in his writings, from the generality of intellectuals who defend working-class culture, it was because he flouted factions, including the political ones which tried to co-opt him as a propagandist.

One of the things which gave Williams quasi-heroic status among working-class

intellectuals was his belief that high culture was merely a variant of popular culture. Defending the right of popular art forms (such as television) to be taken seriously was clearly a gesture of homage to his parents; and one to which the hearts of many literary left-wingers would return an echo. For all his determination to lecture on films, and to question the scope of the English syllabus at Cambridge, Williams was no stage iconoclast: his practical experience included active service as a tank officer, followed by 15 years extramural teaching.

I was brought up 20 miles away from Williams, in a similar South Welsh environment. I work in the Cambridge English Faculty, recognise the sheer bloodmindedness of British academic life and miss what the mountains represent. Yet, despite these

potential affinities, I do not find myself drawn to his writings. The testimony gathered in Inglis's genial and absorbing book suggests that the experience is not uncommon. Ostensibly, the problem lies in the abstract over-elaborations of Williams's style. Yet this in turn emerges from Williams's habit of avoiding introspection.

When, in 1977, Williams suffered a breakdown, he was bent on not understanding it. The attempt at introspection had "stirred some very deep sediments". Williams's response had been to develop a style of deliberate obliqueness, which protected him from his own inward gaze, but estranged him from the class (and maybe the father) he wished to communicate with.

Political convictions derive from personal allegiances. It is the strength of Williams's writings to suggest this, their weakness to flinch from acknowledging it fully.

Revenant in the republic of letters

Giles Coren

BELLE DU SEIGNEUR

By Albert Cohen
Viking, £20

tions of a disappearing foreign bourgeoisie?

Central to the plot is Solal. He it is who carries the great solipsistic weight of all Cohen's work. For *Belle du Seigneur* is the last in a trilogy of novels that charts Solal's rise from a childhood in the Jewish community of Cepha-

lonia to Under Secretary-General at the League of Nations in Geneva. The first two novels, *Solal* and *Mange-clous*, were published in the 1930s, in a climate still haunted by Proust and dominated by James Joyce. This, the final part, was 30 years in the making, and it shows.

The first third of the novel belongs to Adrien Deume, a grade B minion of Solal at the League of Nations. Deume is petit bourgeois, gauche, and covetous of acceptance in the highest circles. As he sits at his desk, pen-pushing and gushing streams of consciousness,

it is almost painful to witness his thought processes — his tragic and paradoxical aspirations are so like our own. The miserable human mind deserves more privacy than this.

The great Solal accepts an invitation to dinner chez Deume, and for 100 pages we are subjected to the flusterings of the Deume household as the meal is planned. The menu, printed on fancy little place cards, will have foie gras, caviare, smoked salmon, any number of delicacies obscenely and ostentatiously piled upon each other. Deume's lisping and ineffectual father

reads aloud from an etiquette book on how to butter a bread roll and drink from the side of a soup spoon, his mother instructs the hired butler, Adrien prepares conversational fireworks and frets. But Solal, in accordance with the fatalistic drive of the narrative, will not come. And if he did, he would share our snobbish revulsion.

All this is but preamble to Solal's seduction of Deume's wife, Ariane. She leaves her bedraggled bureaucrat for his brilliant and beautiful boss. But, such is the nature of human passion, and such was

Cohen's bleak obsession with it, that their love, too, must putrefy. The depiction of the relationship's collapse is miserable and, ultimately, horrific. It is the very opposite of the climax of *Ulysses*. No returns, no reunions, no rebirth.

AND THEN the gloom goes deeper. For this is the life of a European Jew in the 1930s. What hope for the future even if the course of love does run smooth? Solal has, to some extent, denied his Jewishness to reach the exalted social position he enjoys. But his uncle, known as the valiant, self-styled knight-errant defenders of the Solal cause, make several entrances to remind him of his roots.

Grotesque, parodic caricatures of lechery, acquisitiveness and vice, they play a strange role, challenging anti-Semitic prejudice by pandering to it so obtusely. In earlier manifestations they were picaresquely comical. Here, as Nazism looms unmentioned on the borders, they are dangerous.

And so the novel rambles on, seldom more than the sum of its parts, never a page turner, but always exquisitely rendered; a strange artefact frozen in suspended animation and then brought to life again in a less self-conscious age. Like so much that came out of that time, it is difficult to pin down, difficult to read, and difficult to ignore.

WADING through this immense novel, you may be beset by a single overriding worry. *Belle du Seigneur* is the masterpiece of Albert Cohen (1895-1981), a megalith in 20th-century culture, and a descendant of Balzac and Proust in the francophone tradition of millitant brevity. Whose fault is it, then, that the book is so difficult to read?

It is not the translator's, for David Coward's achievement is as gigantic as Cohen's. Gilbert Adair was assumed to have carried off the year's translating laurels with his edition of Georges Perec's lipogrammatic novel *La Disparition*, but Coward has taken on an equally daunting task. The result is a sparklingly fluid

Cold snap retains hold on fixtures

FROST kept its grip on the racing programme as more fixtures were called off yesterday. The meeting scheduled for Kempton yesterday was abandoned after overnight snow compounded the existing problems with frost, and the four set for today — Carlisle, Plumpton, Stratford and Taunton — had been lost by noon yesterday.

Taunton and Plumpton fell within minutes of each other after early-morning inspections, and were soon joined by Carlisle and Stratford. All four tracks are frozen.

Tomorrow's fixture at Newcastle has also fallen to a combination of frost and snow, and inspections are planned for the day's remaining three meetings. Fontwell and Newbury will inspect at 9.30 this morning, with Warwick's prospects to be decided at 12.30.

There is an inspection at 9.00 tomorrow to check on Catterick's programme for Saturday, and the best hopes of a resumption of National Hunt racing rest with another of Saturday's cards, Folkestone, where there is a light covering of snow but no frost in the ground.

In Ireland, yesterday's meeting at Leopardstown was cancelled and put back to Saturday to replace the scheduled meeting at Punchestown, which, in turn, has been rescheduled for next Wednesday. Prospects for today's meeting at Leopardstown also look bleak. There is a 7.00 inspection there.

Looking further ahead, next Tuesday's meeting at Ayr is already under threat. The Scottish track lost this week's Boxing Day fixture because of frost and the course manager, Mark Kershaw, said yesterday: "There has not been much change and it is still freezing."

Wolverhampton arranges additional meeting for Saturday

Fresh opportunities ease frost's bite

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

OFFICIALS moved with admirable swiftness yesterday to resurrect some of the top races which have fallen victim to a freeze-up destined to continue for the rest of this week.

With severe frost wiping out any racing in Britain for the second successive day yesterday, plans were hatched to stage the lost feature races, in one shape or another, over the next few weeks — with entries for three rearranged or new events closing at noon today.

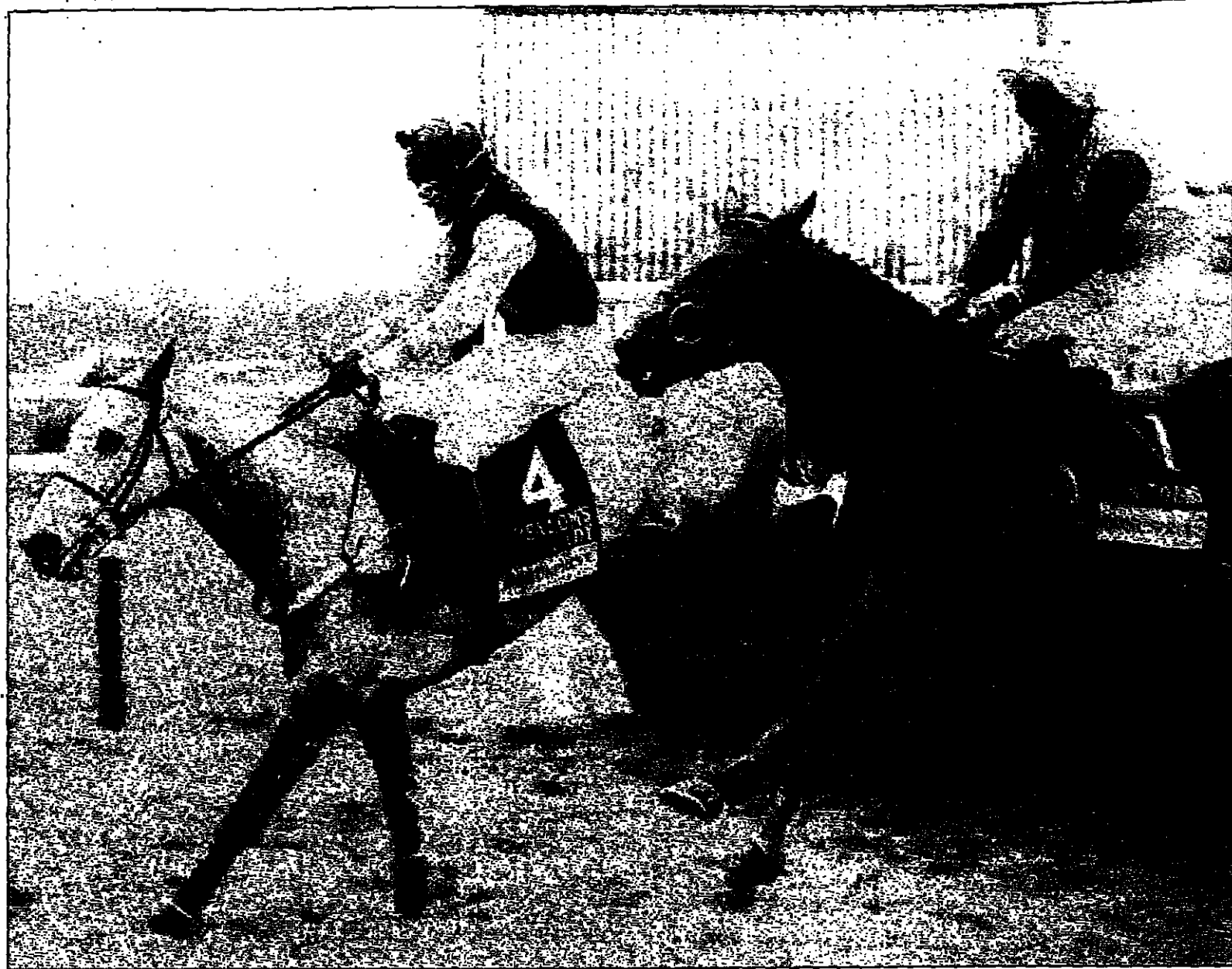
After a day of hectic discussions, involving the British Horseracing Board's (BHB) race planning department, the Levy Board, sponsors and racecourses, the BHB announced a package of measures to assist racing after the losses inflicted by the extreme weather.

They include an extra all-weather Flat meeting at Wolverhampton this Saturday afternoon, which will be staged in addition to an existing evening meeting at the Midlands track. Entries for the new fixture close at midday today.

Cheltenham on New Year's Day will be expanded to include two races designed specifically for horses aimed originally at the Bonusprint Christmas Hurdle and Castleford Chase, which were lost to the weather at Kempton and Wetherby respectively yesterday. Both races, over two miles, will be limited handicaps with a 14lb weight range aimed at maximising competitiveness — with entries also closing at noon today.

Prize-money for the Peter Ross Novices' Chase at Ascot on January 13 will be increased from £12,000 to £21,000 after the loss of the Tripleprint Feltham Novices' Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day. The race is over a similar distance of three miles.

After the loss of the Coral Welsh National at Chepstow yesterday, the race scheduled to be run as the John Hughes Grand National Trial at Chepstow on February 3 will be renamed the Coral Grand National Trial with £25,000 added to stakes.



The grey Absalom's Lady beating Atours in last season's Christmas Hurdle at Kempton, a replacement for which will be run at Cheltenham

The extra six-race meeting at Wolverhampton this Saturday will go ahead only if sufficient entries have been received by noon today. The extra races planned for Cheltenham next Monday — the Levy Board Limited Handicap Chase and the Bonusprint Limited Handicap Hurdle — mean the eight-race card will start at 11.50am.

According to the London Weather Centre last night, there is no immediate sign of a let-up in the Arctic conditions but BHB officials were taking heart from a forecast of rising temperatures over the weekend. Should the Cheltenham meeting fall to the weather, the Bonusprint Hurdle will be switched to Sandown on January 6.

After the expected cancellation of Kempton yesterday, the King George VI Tripleprint Chase will be the feature event at Sandown on the same day. Meanwhile, the Matthew McCloy controversy refuses to go away. After the decision by the Racehorse Owners' Association (ROA) to ask the chairman of the BHB's industry committee to consider his position last week, the National Trainers' Federation (NTF) stepped into the fray yesterday.

An election is due to take place next month to fill the vacancy created on the BHB in June when Michael Darnell steps down as one of the three

industry committee elected directors. Nominations for the vacancy are due to close on January 3, with the election planned to take place two weeks later. Despite the controversy surrounding his much publicised flight to the United States, McCloy has been favourite to be elected unopposed.

However, Peter Cundell, president of the NTF, confirmed yesterday his organisation is seeking a delay in the

election. "We are recommending to the industry committee that the election is postponed until April. After the letter from the ROA, there is a need for a cooling-off period."

The request for a delay will be supported by the breeders and, interestingly, John Reid, a leading member of the Jockeys' Association, said yesterday that while McCloy appeared to be a good chairman "you would have to question his judgment."

Nielsen's increasing rift with his national association suggests that the 28-year-old is going to retire after the Games. Whether or not he actually gets there, however, is very much in question. He is ranked No 40 in the world, 11 places behind Darren Hall, the former European champion, and nine behind Peter Knowles, the Scottish Open champion — and only two Britons can qualify in each event for Atlanta.

Nielsen's absence costs him funding

By RICHARD EATON

ANDERS NIELSEN has been denied funding for the second time by the Badminton Association of England, which means he will have to pay his own way to tournaments until the end of the Olympic Games qualifying period if he is to get to Atlanta.

Nielsen, the national champion, is being punished for again pulling out of a British grand slam tournament without a medical certificate, in this case the Friends Provident Hampshire Open at Portsmouth, which starts today.

When the Surrey man did the same thing in Perth in September, he was denied funding until the end of January, and the extension of this ban for another three months means that by the start of the Games in August, Nielsen will have spent about £6,000 of his own money travelling abroad.

The Association is angered that Nielsen's actions make it impossible for it to promote the British grand slam circuit properly, but Nielsen claims that the floors at Portsmouth are so hard that they constitute a fitness risk. "I'm already paying my own way to the Finnish and Portuguese Opens next month so I can't take a chance with my knees. The floors are a disgrace at Portsmouth and players have written and complained about them before," Nielsen said.

However, Tom Marrs, the Association's events director, replied: "He must be getting desperate. It's the same type of floor as 90 per cent of leisure centres in this country and many top players have played on it without complaint."

Nielsen's increasing rift with his national association suggests that the 28-year-old is going to retire after the Games. Whether or not he actually gets there, however, is very much in question. He is ranked No 40 in the world, 11 places behind Darren Hall, the former European champion, and nine behind Peter Knowles, the Scottish Open champion — and only two Britons can qualify in each event for Atlanta.

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HARVEY NASH PLC

Scottish fixture list takes on blank look

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

FOOTBALL in Scotland is facing a near-blank weekend with the Arctic weather conditions unlikely to loosen their grip on the country before then. Only two Scottish League grounds — Ibrox and Tannadice, both of which have undersoil heating — were able to stage matches on Boxing Day and the prospects for Saturday look no better.

Rangers are due to entertain Hibernian in the only Bell's Scottish League premier division match with a realistic chance of going ahead, while Dundee United are scheduled to meet Airdrie in the first division at Tannadice.

At Tynecastle, where Hearts were hoping to entertain Celtic, the chairman, Chris Robinson, said: "The pitch is covered but is hard, and there's no real chance of the game

being on. We will confirm on Friday whether it can go ahead or not." A postponement would be bad news financially for Hearts, whose Boxing Day match against Motherwell also fell victim to the weather.

It will mean the Edinburgh club going nearly six weeks without any gate receipts, with their last home game staged on December 2 and the next Tynecastle match likely to be the rescheduled Motherwell fixture on January 10.

Robinson, whose club is reported to be struggling financially, added: "The lack of funds will be a big strain and we stand to lose up to £30,000 if Saturday's game is postponed. But we have to manage our finances and get on with it."

While recognising that undersoil heating would help, Robinson said that there were no immediate plans to install a heating system. "Under-

soil heating is a must, but at present we have two more priorities at Hearts," he said. "It will be two or three years before we can look at that."

The stadium and team are uppermost in our minds and undersoil heating is the last of our priorities. In real terms, undersoil heating can take a long time to pay for itself. At the same time, we understand how disappointing it must be for our supporters."

Some top-flight clubs believe undersoil heating should be a requirement for premier division status but Robinson said: "I feel that if it is to be mandatory, there should be a time scale similar to the Taylor Report, with clubs being given around five years to complete the work."

If the match is postponed, it will give Celtic selection problems for the Old Firm game against Rangers on January 3. John Hughes, the defend-

er, and the midfield player, Peter Grant, will miss the Celtic Park meeting as they still have one more game of three-match suspensions to complete.

Hamish Walker, a Scottish Football League spokesman, said there were no immediate fears that the cold snap would produce a fixture backlog. Walker said: "There will be no panic here as we will be able to cope with what the weather gives us."

"We have already rescheduled games for January 9, 10, 16 and 17, and while postponements obviously cause headaches, there are not too many midweek matches scheduled over the next few months."

Walker added that growing calls for mandatory undersoil heating at premier division clubs were unlikely to result in a change in League rules.

"We would have to go a long way down the line before that became a

reality, although we have had a long and involved series of discussions with a stadia criteria working group and we are awaiting their recommendations on facilities for grounds in Scotland," he said.

"We are looking to improve every aspect of facilities for supporters and, while the report could recommend undersoil heating, I don't think it would be imposed on clubs currently outside the premier division as many couldn't afford it and might win promotion only to go straight back down. It would be difficult to deny any club promotion to the premier division because they have no undersoil heating."

Fergus McCann, the Celtic chief executive, said: "My preferred option would be a winter shutdown similar to the one in Germany, where the league stops between December 15 and February 10."

St Helens told to prove case or pay the price

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

ST HELENS will have to present sick notes for all but one of their regular first team, who missed the debacle at Wigan on Tuesday, at a Rugby Football League (RFL) inquiry into why such a weakened side was fielded in the 58-4 defeat.

Even though the club claims to have medical certificates to explain a dozen absences, the spirit of St Helens' actions in making a mockery of the final Boxing Day meeting with Wigan will be taken into consideration by a RFL panel next week. If a case to answer is found, the RFL board of directors could well mete out a more severe punishment than the record fines of £8,000 and £12,000, with half suspended, given to Leeds for similar offences last year.

Paul Harrison, the RFL spokesman, said: "We have a responsibility to the near 20,000 crowd who spent hard-earned money going to a match where they expected to see a match between two top teams involving some of the biggest names in the sport."

Signs of miraculous recoveries for St Helens' home Regal Trophy semi-final on Saturday against Warrington, will be watched for. Paul Newlove and Anthony Sullivan, who, between them, have scored 36 tries this season, are said to have little chance of playing. Chris Joynt, a fellow international player, is also doubtful at this stage.

With Alan Hunte and Tommy Martyn among long-term injury victims, the casualty list at Knowsley Road numbers 13. David Howes, the club's chief executive, said: "We have medical certificates for every one. In fact, our problems have become worse because

Chris Morley, our second-row forward, broke a thumb at Wigan and is out for the rest of the season."

Howes added that the club was prepared to justify its actions and would defend itself vigorously. That still does not explain a shameful disregard for the sport's ethics but where Howes does have a point is that a shortened season has presented many exceptional circumstances.

The match at Wigan was the start of a four-match run in 11 days for St Helens in what has become a devalued and largely meaningless centenary championship campaign. For all clubs, the end next month cannot come soon enough, so preparations for the start of the Super League, in March, can begin in earnest.

In the case of Warrington, should they make the Regal Trophy final at Huddersfield on January 13, the club would have to cram three matches from a fixture backlog into the final week of the season; a quite ludicrous scenario.

St Helens are looking to repair some of the public relations damage by allowing children under 16 into the ground for £1 for the semi-final on Saturday. "We are conscious that there are many games over the Christmas period and people have limited budgets," Howes said. It is a pity the same attitude was not adopted on Boxing Day.

Leeds may increase an £80,000 offer for Glen Tomlinson, Batley's highly-rated Australian scrum half. They have continuing problems at half back after a torn arm muscle and another potentially lengthy lay-off for Tony Kemp.

Jones fails to see the error of his ways

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

IN THE latest chapter of a career that is fast degenerating into total ridicule — if it has not plumbed such depths already — Vinnie Jones, the Wimbledon midfielder player, is to review a tape of his sending-off during the 2-1 victory over Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday. That it happened on Boxing Day was, for once, inappropriate. Jones' eleventh dismissal in ten years was for committing two offences that were deemed cautionable by Dermot Gallagher, the referee.

When the red card was held aloft in the 53rd minute, it was for Jones' tackle from behind — at best, ill-judged; at worst, reckless — on Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea sweeper. It was probably one of the easier decisions that Gallagher has had to make in his years of refereeing and yet Jones, as usual, protested his innocence.

He claimed he had gone for the ball, got it and that Gullit had been rather too theatrical as he tumbled to the ground. The fact that the Incredible Hulk, let alone the elegant Dutchman, would have struggled to stay upright in the face of such a fierce challenge appeared to have escaped Jones.

It is the third time he has been sent off this season, although his premature exit in the 1-0 win against Liverpool in September was later annulled, on appeal, and reduced to a booking. He was also dismissed for two bookable offences, in the 4-1 defeat at Nottingham Forest last month and is still serving the five-match international suspension that was imposed for his sending-off when playing for Wales against Georgia in June.

Quite where Jones, 31 next month, goes now is a vexing question. He is on the transfer list, at his own request, and is becoming a liability as Wimbledon attempt to steer clear of relegation from the FA Carling Premiership. Birmingham City and West Bromwich Albion have been mooted as possibilities for his next move, but his erratic behaviour is limiting the options by the day. Apparently, an Albanian international with a Portuguese passport, joins the German pair of Elke Kram and Uwe Rösler, Georgiou Kinkladze, the



Batty unleashes the shot that brought him his first goal for nearly three years and helped Blackburn Rovers to beat Manchester City

Ball turns to Benfica in bid for survival

MANCHESTER City have turned to the Continent again to try to reinvigorate their attempt at survival in the FA Carling Premiership. Beaten 2-0 by Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on Tuesday night, they agreed yesterday to a two-month loan trial for Eduardo Abazaj, the Benfica central defender.

City now have five "foreigners" on their books, and against Blackburn became the first Premiership side to start a match with four overseas players since the rule change which means that European nationals are no longer classed as foreign players.

Abazaj, an Albanian international with a Portuguese passport, joins the German pair of Elke Kram and Uwe Rösler, Georgiou Kinkladze, the

Georgian, and Ronnie Eke-lund, the Denmark forward, in Alan Ball's squad.

The Manchester City manager, meanwhile, had to reflect on an unexpected Blackburn double-act that left his side in the Premiership relegation zone. City might have expected to be on the wrong end of another strike by Alan Shearer, but when David Batty scored from 25 yards, his first goal since getting one for Leeds United against Middlesbrough in January 1993, Ball knew that it was not going to be his evening.

"Shearer's was a fabulous goal, but you can't expect Batty to hit one like that," Ball said. "Everybody worked hard. The way we kept possession and our passing were smashing. We just didn't take

our chances, though, and I feel very sorry for a lot of my lads because they deserved more than they got."

Had Niall Quinn hit the target rather than the post from six yards soon after Shearer's 24th goal of the season, City might have prevented Rovers from completing their seventh successive home league win. But with chances going begging, their belief began to drain, and City eventually had to be grateful to immerse their goalkeeper, and the woodwork, which denied Batty and Stuart Ripley, for restricting Blackburn's winning margin.

For Batty, two of whose four previous career goals had also been scored against City, it was the completion of a rare "hat-trick". "We'll let him keep the ball for that one

goal," Ray Harford, the Blackburn manager, said. Batty saw the funny side of things himself. "I always enjoy playing City," he said. "I suppose the goal was long overdue really, but it was a great ball from Alan that set it up. The crowd all knew I'd waited a long time, and so did the other players, but to be honest it's not a part of my game that really bothers me."

It bothered City, though, as Ball's resigned air intimated. Suddenly, the bright form that made him manager of the month in November must seem a distant memory.

Ball said: "We had chances but didn't hit the back of the net, and we haven't all season. We are missing them in the six-yard box, snatching at them, hitting the post, and not scoring."

Blackburn's performance, though, served once again to make a mockery of their form away from Ewood Park, where they have dropped five points from ten games. They have picked up only three on their travels, although Harford was quick to point out that their only defeat in seven games was the 5-0 mauling away to Coventry City on an ice-bound pitch at Highfield Road on December 9.

On Saturday, when Tottenham Hotspur visit Ewood Park, three records are on the line, and at least one of them must go. Shearer has scored in all ten of Blackburn's home matches, and their victory over City was their seventh in succession in the league, while Tottenham boast the Premiership's only unbeaten away record.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Toronto 93 Milwaukee 87, Atlanta 94 LA Clippers 88, Detroit 100 Golden State 90, Miami 96 New Jersey 93, Indiana 103 Chicago 97, Houston 100 Vancouver 84, Denver 114 Dallas 102, Utah 114 Portland 104, LA Lakers 102 Boston 91, Sacramento 115 San Antonio 98					
Eastern Conference					
Atlantic division					
	W	L	Pct	GB	
Orlando	22	6	756	7	
New York	19	7	721	2	—
Miami	14	12	738	7	
Boston	13	13	480	8	
Washington	12	13	480	8	
New Jersey	10	15	400	10	
Philadelphia	9	19	295	15	
Central division					
Chicago	23	3	895	—	
Indiana	14	11	860	8	
LA Lakers	13	12	820	9	
Atlanta	13	13	500	10	
Charlotte	13	14	481	10	
Orlando	13	14	481	10	
Minnesota	9	16	360	13	
Toronto	9	20	310	15	
Western Conference					
Pacific division					
Houston	25	8	714	1	
San Antonio	19	8	660	1	
Utah	18	9	651	1	
Denver	17	10	622	2	
Minnesota	12	17	292	11	
Dallas	7	18	280	11	
Vancouver	4	24	143	16	
Midwest division					
Seattle	17	8	680	—	
Sacramento	18	9	640	1	
LA Lakers	18	9	640	1	
Phoenix	13	13	458	8	
Portland	11	15	423	6	
Golden State	10	16	384	7	
LA Clippers	10	17	370	8	

GOLF

SONY WORLD RANKINGS: 1 G Norman (Aus) 21, 2 N Price (Can) 16, 3 B Langer (Ger) 15, 4 E Els (SA) 14, 5 C Montgomerie (Scot) 14, 6 S N Faldo (Eng) 13, 7 J Pate (Aus) 13, 8 J F Coulter (US) 11, 9 M Ossi (Jap) 10, 10 R 10 S Blomqvist (Swe) 10, 11 J Letrangier (US) 9, 12 A M Oosthuis (Ned) 9, 13 S Tormaa (Fin) 8, 14 L Lujan (US) 8, 15 V Singh (Ind) 8, 16 J Roberts (US) 8, 17 D Low (US) 7, 18 P J Shearer (US) 7, 19 M McCumber (US) 7, 20 J Hahn (US) 7, 21 S Hoch (US) 7, 22 C Rogers (US) 7, 23 P Mickelson (US) 7, 24 D Frost (SA) 6, 25 J Hahn (US) 6, 26 S Blomqvist (Swe) 6, 27 J Gallagher (US) 6, 28 M Campbell (US) 6, 29 B Faron (US) 6, 30 J F Coulter (US) 6, 31 P Shearer (US) 6, 32 J Murrill (US) 6, 33 T Watson (US) 6, 34 M Caldeira (US) 6, 35 M Mielke (US) 6, 36 S Blythe (US) 6, 37 J Pate (US) 6, 38 J Letrangier (US) 6, 39 S Simpson (US) 6, 40 J Letrangier (US) 6, 41 D Lavel (US) 6, 42 B Gussion (US) 6, 43 C Farrow (US) 6, 44 M O'Hara (US) 6, 45 J Daly (US) 6.

RUGBY LEAGUE

BURTONWOOD BREWERY LANCASHIRE CUP: First Postponed: Wodson v Salford.

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL
SCHOOLS MATCHES: Premier League under-19 trophy, Norfolk v Essex (at Norwich, 10). Premier League under-16 trophy, Inner London v Cambridgeshire (at Egham, 11). Kent v Sussex (at Coburn 20).
OTHER SPORT
BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Worthing v Newcastle (8.0). Premier League: WDC championship (Leicester, 19.00). DARTS: WDC championship (Leicester, 19.00). HOCKEY: Under-15, under-17 divisional tournaments (Bristol). ICE HOCKEY: British League: First division: Swindon v Brackley (8.0). SNOKER: Dr Martens European League (Diamond Centre, Irthingborough).

RUGBY UNION

Club match
Leicester 51 Barbarians 25
Leicester: Triggs, Hackney (2), Underwood (2), Kardon, Richards, Black, Corns, Harris (3). Barbarians: Triggs, Bore, Stacey, Proctor, Corns, King (3). Pen: King (2).
SNOKER
IRTHLINGBOROUGH: Dr Martens European League (Diamond Centre, Irthingborough) 8.0. Frame scores (Rodon) 65, 65, 61, 60, 74, 5, 93-18, 70-5, 78-0, 71-64, 62-15.
TENNIS
CLEAR VIEW: LTA Winter Series: Phoenix: Men: G Bradford (5) vs D Ward (Kent) 6-2, 5-3. Women: H Cook (Essex) 6-1, 2-6. (Essex) 6-2, 6-1.
ICE HOCKEY
BRITISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Banbury 3, Sheffield 4, Cardiff 5, Nottingham 5. First division: Doncaster 16.

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New year resolutions to make sense of the sporting world

A new world is but a new mind. At the end of the year everybody is entitled to dream of what the coming one may bring. The page is fresh; all it needs is the doers and makers to write down their deeds in ink.

In the world of sport, next year's bill of fare includes the Olympic Games in Atlanta, the cricket World Cup, football's European championship in England and the first season in rugby union's brave new professional world. Who will feast the longest?

We are encouraged to make new year resolutions and usually mislay them before Twelfth Night. Still, this is the time to fashion the world in a way that satisfies our urge for order. Therefore, begging pardon for such indulgence, let us hope that:

Terry Venables at last learns to decline the verb, 'to do'

France win the five nations' championship with the flair that is evidently beyond buttoned-up England.

Television interviewers stop trading pally banalities with football managers and, instead of making tame assertions ("it's always good to get a point"), ask some proper questions.

Frank Bruno retires, without any broken bones, to enjoy his career beyond the ring as a licensed buffoon.

Jonathan Edwards continues to demonstrate that, splendid though success is, neither the winning nor even the taking part is ever the most important thing in life.

Damon Hill admits: "Fair dos, Michael is obviously the better driver."

England meet and beat Australia in the World Cup final in Lahore on

March 17, to give Michael Atherton encouragement that he is getting somewhere.

Terry Venables learns to decline the verb, "to do".

David Mellor gives up English demotic.

Radio 5 Live presenters discover the vowel.

People leave Liam Botham and Peter Phillips alone until they do something worth writing about, and leave Ian Botham alone until he says something worth writing about.

We get through that increasingly tiresome tennis tournament in south London without any reference to strawberries, or shots of loafing film stars.

Jack Rowell owns up to his own mistakes.

Kevin Keegan, from whom Rowell could absorb a lesson or two about responsibility, wins the FA Carling Premiership for Newcastle United.

Fred Trueman is dropped from the Test Match Special team before

SPORTING RESOLUTIONS



MICHAEL HENDERSON

there is a fatality on air and his colleagues in the commentary box are taken away "to assist police with their inquiries".

The Rugby Football League imposes a ten-point handicap on Wigan in the Challenge Cup. Otherwise, hand it to them now.

The Football Association declares that any club that offers

George Graham a job will be fined £5 million and docked 25 points, with no right of appeal.

IN THE manner of Jonathan Swift, it is tempting to offer in addition a few "modest proposals". Thus, in a perfect world it would be possible to arrange for:

"Prince" Naseem Hamed, the World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion with a mouth as wide as the Humber, to be picked in the England front row against France in Paris on January 20. With luck he might never open it again.

The BBC to appoint a new head of children's television programmes in the interests of "relevance": someone with a knowledge of the unformed mind, a limited vocabulary and an emotional kinship with the *Blue Peter* set. This is clearly a job for Paul Gascoigne.

Anybody wearing a baseball cap the wrong way round to be put in the stocks for a week. In the case

of Ian Wright and Chris Lewis, who have "previous", a month at least.

Brian Lara plc to spend a day as an invisible witness in the Australia dressing-room, to see how responsible adults behave in a team environment. An afternoon with them would remind him that he owes cricket much more than the game will ever owe him.

The following words and phrases to be outlawed: genius, icon, guru, outfit, emotive, gaffer, Brit, enthuse, creative, lifestyle, well.

pleased, all credit, wall-to-wall, check out, the business (as in do). Radio and television folk who use them will be gagged and forced to listen to Sir Alec Guinness reading Eliot's *Four Quartets*, to discover the nobility of English when it is written and spoken by a master.

Linford Christie, who compared his autobiography with the Bible, no less, to join a think-tank comprising Sir Isaiah Berlin, Alfred Brendel and Jonathan Miller on a remodelled Late Night Line-up panel to discuss "Life in the fast lane: art, metaphysics, track and field".

Damon Hill admits: 'Fair dos, Michael is obviously the better driver'

THREE memories of 1995, from "abroad". For pleasure, Manhattan: watching the Europe team regain the Ryder Cup on television in a Madison Avenue bar. For amusement, Paris: discussing cricket over dinner with the American baritone, Thomas Hampson. For education, Soweto: observing the crowd at England's opening first-class game on their tour of South Africa. It is not often that sport helps to change a country.

John Bryant is on holiday

Nomadic club's future appears brighter despite defeat at Leicester

Barbarians find tradition has a price

Leicester 51
Barbarians 25

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE future of the Barbarians has been stabilised by an extension of their established sponsorship arrangements. However, the playing future of the most famous nomadic club in the world remains shrouded after Leicester equalled their highest score in the traditional Christmas fixture at a frosty Welford Road yesterday.

Yet judgments must be made on a broad canvas. This was, after all, the champions of England creaking back into action after a period of comparative hibernation against a guest XV whose selections were limited by national demands and who were nevertheless seeking to combine youth, experience, and a dash of overseas flavouring. Yet they were encouraged by a new three-year agreement with Scottish Amicable which should ensure their ability to compete at home and, more particularly, away.

That more than 15,000 spectators were warned by a competitive first half, then

Gloucester have recruited Alastair Saverimuttu, the former England Colts centre, from Coventry. Saverimuttu, 25, who has also played for Bath and Bristol, is the second emerging player to join Gloucester within a week after Trevor Woodman, 19, the England Under-21 prop forward, moved to them from Bath.

nourished by a second-half explosion which brought Leicester six of their seven tries, should also be remembered. "The club has many friends within the game, who appreciate our value in bringing players together and encouraging them to display all their skills," Mickey Steele-Bodger, the Barbarians president, said.

Significantly, too, Leicester continue to prize the game, though next year they will have a delicate dilemma to solve. The fixture is scheduled for a Friday, 24 hours before a league match, and if Leicester are as good as their word they will ask for a league postponement so that they can honour tradition even amid the paraphernalia of professionalism.

Even so, the Barbarians will concede the need to pay players if they have to, while hoping that the fundamental reasons for representing the club can be sustained. Moreover, if Leicester play against Sale in the Courage Clubs



A full-length tackle by Shiel, right, the Barbarians centre, forces Hackney, the wing who scored two tries for Leicester, to concede possession

Championship on Saturday with as much *joie de vivre* as they did yesterday, their members, too, can look forward to a happy new year.

They will have been encouraged by the display of their two centres, Delaney and Robinson; particularly the latter, whose form was sufficiently wayward to have caused his omission from this fixture until the withdrawal with a knee injury of James Overend. Delaney, a student at Leicester University, grew in stature as the match progressed, aided greatly by Leicester's domination of possession after the interval. Yet the Leicester crowd is discerning enough to recognise opposition skills, notably those of Leigh Davies,

the bustling youngster from Neath, whose outside breaks are a comparative rarity in the modern game. Had the Barbarians' finishing been as good as their creative midfield running, their first-half lead would have been more substantial than 13-11.

Throughout the first half, Leicester, whose ground staff produced an excellent surface (this game has not been postponed since 1980), huffed and puffed into some semblance of order. While they did so the Barbarians flourished, the speed of Gomersall on the break catching the hosts napping, and the knowledgeable Morrison supplying the vital link.

Their forwards drove Berek

over the line for the first try of the game and although Underwood responded with his tenth in the series, Leicester had to wait until the second half before taking a grip. This was their fourth successive win over the Barbarians and was ensured by two tries in three minutes from Hackney.

The wing, playing his hundredth game for the club, finished off some outstanding team tries earlier this season, and he thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity given partly by good application of the advantage law by Derek Bevan, partly by a telling pass from Kilford. His second try, preceded by a thunderous hand-off by Cockerill, carried him 60 metres past a despairing

defence and earned him the man-of-the-match award.

Thereafter the Barbarians were chasing shadows. Any try by Richards is greeted by delight at Welford Road, and Back evokes similar elation. In between, however, Underwood scored his second try after splendid driving play by Rowntree which he will do well to reproduce when Leicester take themselves to Bath on the first Saturday in the new year.

The crowd looked forward to their team surpassing the 51 points scored against the Barbarians in 1993; instead it was their guests who signed off with two tries, the first of them made by the fluent King and scored by the forceful South

African, Straculi, the second by Proctor after Leicester, uncharacteristically, turned over possession with their defence away.

SCORES: Leicester: Tries: Hackney (2), Underwood (2), Richards, Back. Conversion: Harris (2). Penalty goals: Harris (2). Barbarians: Tries: Berek, Straculi, Proctor. Conversion: King (2). Penalty goals: King (2).

LEICESTER: W Kilford, S Hackney, P Delaney, R Robinson, R Underwood, J Harris, A Kockor, G Rowntree, R Cockerill, D Garforth, C Tardock, P Grant, M Poole, N Bask, D Richards.
BARBARIANS: J Thomas (Llewellyn and Wales), D Loughhead (Toronto Welsh and Wales), L Davies (Wales), G Shiel (Aberdeen and Scotland), W Proctor (Llewellyn and Wales), A King (Bristol Llewellyn and Wales), M Mills (Ospreys), D Laperriere (Wales), S Bask (Bristol Llewellyn and Wales), P Waller (Newcastle and Scotland), R Berek (Ospreys), G Proctor (Wales and Wales), I Morrison (London Scottish and Scotland), R Straculi (Tennessee and South Africa).
Referee: D Bevan (Wales).

SPORT IN BRIEF

Lara leads moves to West Indies return

BRIAN LARA is expected to take the first step towards a return to the West Indies team today when he leads Trinidad and Tobago in a Red Stripe Cup trial match. Lara's future as an international cricketer has been in some doubt since he withdrew from the West Indies squad at present touring Australia after being fined for breaches of conduct during the tour of England last summer. Lara subsequently threatened to retire from the sport.

"We are all looking forward to seeing him back making runs," Theo Cuffy, the Trinidad and Tobago team manager, said yesterday. "It will be great to see him out there. He has had his rest and he wants to get back to playing cricket. He is looking relaxed and at ease. This holiday has done him a world of good." Cuffy said that Lara will captain the team when the Red Stripe Cup begins next month, and intimated that he expected Lara to play for West Indies in the World Cup, which begins in February.

Taylor's smooth start

DARTS: Phil Taylor made an impressive start to his defence of the Vernons Pools World Championship in Purfleet, Essex yesterday by beating Cliff Lazarenko 3-0 in his opening group match. Taylor, the top seed, was never troubled, firing five maximum 180s during the match. He twice won the Embassy World Championship before the breakaway World Darts Council was formed in 1993 and he said: "It would be nice to do the double in both championships." Another former Embassy champion, Jocky Wilson, who suffers from diabetes, has withdrawn from the tournament on medical advice.

Council halts bout

BOXING: James Murray's death after his recent British bantamweight title contest with Drew Docherty in Glasgow has led to boxing being banned at a sports centre in Pottery Bar, Hertsmere Council, owner of the Purzeffield Centre, has called a halt at a venue where Mark Delaney was due to defend his World Boxing Organisation Inter-Continental super-middleweight title against the Welsh champion, Darron Griffiths, on January 23. Barry Hearn's Matchroom organisation staged three promotions there this year but this bout has been switched to Bethnal Green.

Ebdon whitewash

SNOOKER: Peter Ebdon stormed to a superb 8-0 victory over Ken Doherty in the opening match of the Dr Martens European snooker League in Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, yesterday. Ebdon chalked up a best break of 93 in the fourth frame and added further runs of 78 and 71 in taking the sixth and seventh respectively. Play-off places in the event can be decided on frame difference, so Ebdon was thrilled to have started in such magnificent form. "I felt very confident out there and my game flowed nicely," he said. Ebdon plays Ronnie O'Sullivan today.

Americans team up

TENNIS: A United States team has been brought into the Hopman Cup exhibition tournament starting in Perth, Western Australia, on Saturday after the late withdrawal of Sweden. The Swedes were forced to withdraw their team after Mats Wilander, the former world No 1, suffered a back injury. Richey Reneberg and Chanda Rubin will now team up to represent the United States. The other nations competing are Australia, Croatia, France, Germany, Holland, South Africa and Switzerland.

Buccaneers sack Wyche

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Sam Wyche, the head coach of Tampa Bay Buccaneers, was dismissed yesterday after failing to turn around the team's fortunes in four seasons. The departure was rumoured after the Buccaneers lost seven of their last nine games, after a 5-2 start, and finished 7-9 for their fourteenth consecutive losing season. The record, though, was Tampa Bay's best since 1981 in a non-strike year. Wyche's dismissal came one day after the Arizona Cardinals fired their coach, Buddy Ryan.

Windsurfers ride out gale

By BARRY PICKTHALL

WINDSURFING has been through the hoops this year. Two British sailors - Nik Baker and Jamie Hawkins - may have won two world championships, but the sport was left struggling under the strain of debts of about £1.1 million when the Professional Windsurfing Association (PWA), the organiser of the world tour, was forcibly wound up after a competitor-led coup midway through the season.

Competitors were left without their prize-money and sponsors who support this £11 million annual circus were left decidedly uneasy. Many saw parallels with the hula hoop craze - a sport that had reached its zenith and is now in a tail-spin decline, yet, as the year ends, the 200 men

and women who make up the world tour see a brighter future.

After wresting control of events and what money was left in the coffers, the competitors, led by Phil McGain and Stuart Sawyer, have changed their name to the Professional Windsurfing Association (PWA) and won increased support, not just from sponsors but from television as well, for a ten-month tour. Competition will start in Grand Canaria at the end of February and finish with the indoor world championship at Amsterdam next December, when Baker will be defending his title.

The tour, which carries \$2 million (about £1.3 million) in prize-money and has helped several windsurfers to become

millionaires, is now being managed by SSM, a British-based sports marketing company at Chelsea Wharf.

□ Samantha Brewster, the solo British yachtswoman who set out from Southampton in October to challenge Mike Golding's world east-west circumnavigation record, sailing against the prevailing winds and currents, is to restart her voyage from Santos, Brazil, on January 1. She put into the Brazilian port earlier this month to make repairs to the rig on her 67ft yacht *Heath Insured*. The 27-year-old from Ipswich intends to continue around Cape Horn and return to Santos after rounding the Cape of Good Hope and completing a loop up the Atlantic to Ushant, her original starting point.

HEAD winds of 25 knots yesterday slowed the progress of *Sayonara*, the United States maxi yacht, as she continued to lead the way in the Sydney-to-Hobart race. Choppy seas caused further difficulties, putting her an hour behind the schedule needed to beat the record time for the 630 nautical-mile event.

Sayonara, the favourite, had been four hours ahead of the required rate, after progressing down the east coast of Australia at average speeds of 12.5 knots during the day and 10.5 knots at night. The onset of the south westerly winds, however, reduced her to an average of 9.34 knots.

Sayonara, made of carbon fibre and powered by computer-moulded Kevlar sails, needs to average 10.2 knots in

Winds thwart Sayonara

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

order to beat the record of two days, 14 hours, 36 minutes and 56 seconds set by *Kialoa*, the American maxi ketch, in 1975. Encouragingly, a 30-knot westerly wind blowing across Hobart would favour the yacht when she reaches the east coast of Tasmania. "Whether she breaks the record is now touch and go," Peter Campbell, the race spokesman, said.

Her owner, Larry Ellison, the co-founder and chief executive of the Oracle Corporation, is on board with his friend, Rupert Murdoch, the chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*.

Amazon, the Australian pocket maxi, was second, five miles behind *Sayonara*, with another Australian craft,

Brindabella, dropping off the pace a further seven miles behind.

Two yachts in the 98-strong fleet hit whales yesterday, causing one, *Future Shock*, to retire with a broken rudder. The 56ft Australian entry, which had been in seventh place, was the first casualty of what is one of the most gruelling yacht races in the world.

Several whales have been sighted off the south east coast of Australia in recent days and a general warning about the dangers they present has been issued to all competitors. Humpback whales, which can grow to 50 feet in length and weigh up to 26 tonnes, migrate to warmer waters along the eastern coast to give birth at this time of year.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 35

BEQUIBA

(b) A Brazilian timber-tree, *Virola bicuhyba*. Used attributively in *becuiba nut*, the fruit of an aromatic Brazilian tree. From Portuguese *becuiba* (Brazilian), *becuiba*, or *becuiba nut*, a species of nut from Brazil, the cumulative kernel ranked among balsamic remedies.

ECTROMELIA

(a) The congenital absence of a limb or limbs. From the Greek *ektromis* miscarriage + *melos* a limb. "Case of Ectromelia: Kosmak reports, with an illustration, a case showing entire absence of the upper extremities. There is not a dimple indicating where the arms ought to appear."

CANA

(a) A spirit resembling rum made from sugar cane, from the Spanish *cana* cane.

CHOWCHILLA

(c) The black-headed log-runner (*Orthonyx spaldingii*), a small bird found in the mountain ranges in Queensland. Initiative of its note.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Qd4! (attacking the rook on h8) 1... Kg8 2 Bd2 and the black queen is trapped.

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Atherton's bowlers struggle to contain on sluggish pitch

England facing long haul to safety

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN PORT ELIZABETH

PORT ELIZABETH (second day of five): England, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 388 runs behind South Africa

CARING little for style and flair, striving only for effect, South Africa's team of professional pragmatists achieved their purpose yesterday by batting England out of this fourth Test. They were helped, in turn, by the toss, the pitch and opponents whose bowling and fielding disciplines deserted them under stress.

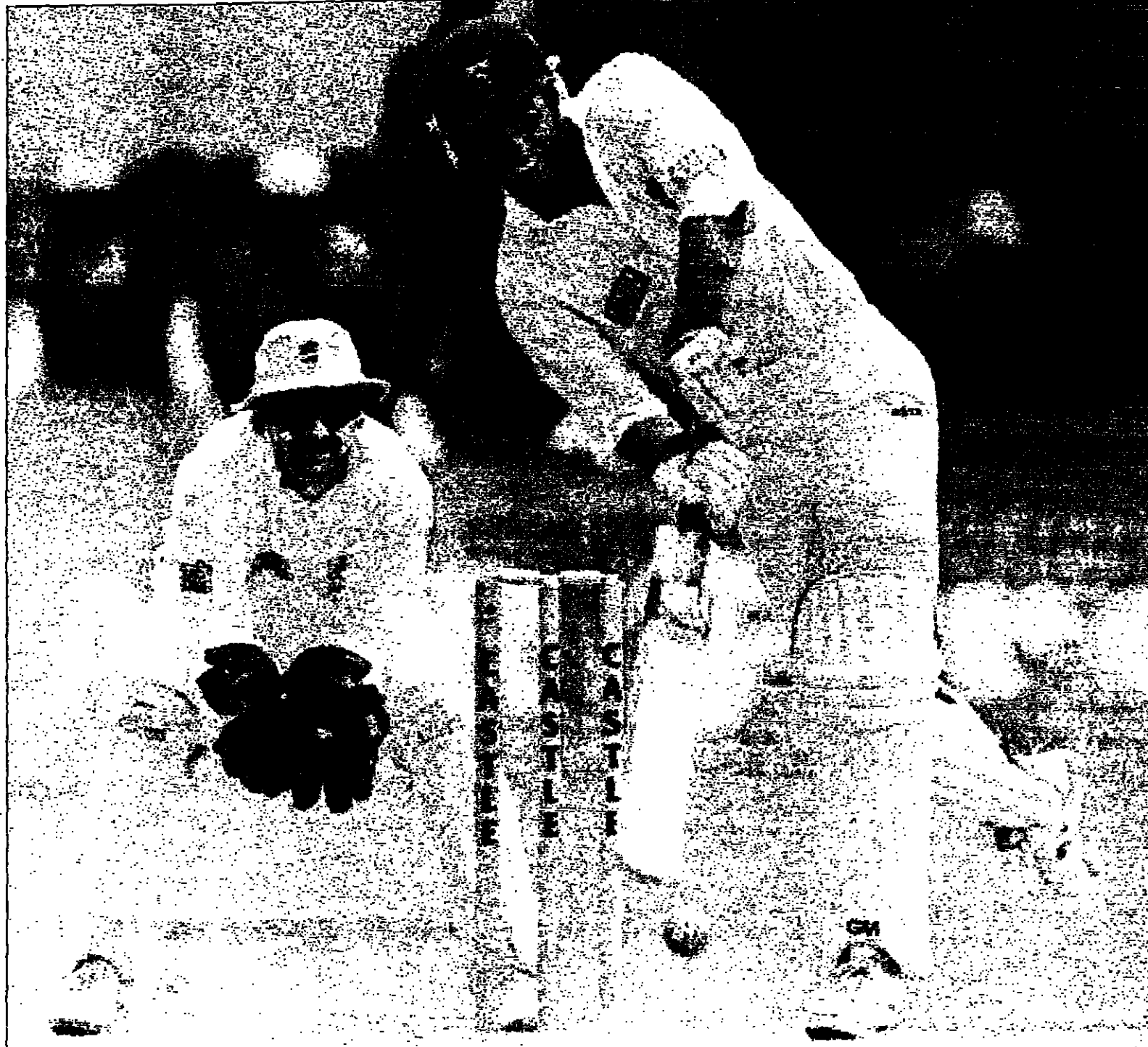
It was not a pretty sight. England's bowling was made to look innocuous, for which this dreadfully slow pitch will be held largely responsible. But the bowling was not only toothless, it was too often wayward and ultimately fatalistic. Six chances were also spurned in the field, three of them in a single, shambolic over, so that when the South African innings ended after more than 111 minutes, the possible outcomes of this match were already limited to two.

To earn the better of them, the draw that will set up the winner-takes-all climax in Cape Town next week, England must bat with considerably more care than they displayed in the field. They did not make a propitious start. Alec Stewart was out to his second legitimate ball, thrusting firm-footed outside off stump, as he is doing far too frequently, but Michael Atherton and Jason Gallian survived the final hour, and the familiar first spell of Paul Adams.

England ought not to lose. On this dreary pitch, the antithesis of what the game should be seeking from its Test match surfaces, only two teams of great disparity should be able to produce a positive result in five days. But, although there is precious little to choose between these sides, England are mentally in retreat, which counts for rather more.

They will have felt the world was gauging up against them. The loss of a coveted toss, the failure to split South Africa's fourth-wicket pair at an impressionable stage and an injury to Mark Illingworth in mid-afternoon yesterday conspired to visibly discourage them. Atherton, hard though he tried to restore the missing spark, had at his disposal bowlers who were neither quick enough nor different enough to worry accomplished batsmen in these conditions.

All Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, can never be accused of complacency and he has devoted



Richardson, whose innings of 84 ensured a formidable South Africa total, gives himself room to drive for four through the offside

revenue and research materials to a team of scientists in an attempt to improve the country's pitches. They should begin here, on the oldest of their Test grounds, for this was cricket in purgatory, of the type to drive away the hard-earned crowds.

Before play yesterday, one London bookmaker was offering 1-21 against an England win. It seemed an attractive price, and would have been if two wickets had fallen rapidly. But England took only one, and though they will carp with some justification about a rejected leg-before shout against Brian McMillan, they failed to strike again before lunch. And then it was too late.

The morning was overcast and humid, offering hope of swing. But even this aid was denied to an England attack

which, without the speed of Malcolm, the varieties of Gough or a genuine spin, as distinct from slow bowler, depends unhealthily upon it. McMillan, sensing he had plenty in his favour, plunged imposingly on to the front foot. Daryl Cullinan was less circumspect and had progressed to within nine runs of his second Test century when he faced Dominic Cork's first ball of the morning. Cullinan would choose to get out to almost anyone before Cork, but one would not have known it here, as he chased a wide long hop with such determination that the edge, from close to the end of the bat, just carried to a tumbling Jack Russell.

The local band, such a feature of this occasion, broke instantly into a rendition of

When the Saints... It failed to inspire the English and Atherton was soon casting around for someone to bowl, calling upon Gallian for two overs as it became clear that the docility of the pitch was entirely to Dave Richardson's liking. McMillan, the bat looking puny in his massive hands, emerged only rarely from his introspection but, when he did, it usually counted. Having pulled away to complain of Russell's chattering, he heaved Illingworth's next ball, a full toss, over mid-wicket for six. It was a considerable surprise when he fell, five overs into the afternoon, though the manner of his going, caught off the bottom edge as he cut at Illingworth, said everything about the pitch.

Illingworth has been a

grave disappointment here. The loop and flight that he had belatedly imposed upon his bowling has now given way to the old Illingworth, content to fire the ball in guttlessly. It is almost as if he is in World Cup mode already.

For all that, he did have four catches missed off his bowling — three in the one, fateful over — and if Atherton had clung on at mid-wicket with Pollock on five and the score on 337, England's suffering might have been curtailed much more quickly. Instead, Pollock, who rode his luck — the third umpire relieving him when he appeared to be run out — and Richardson, short of runs thus far in the series, dragged the total ever nearer impregnability.

Pollock finally fell to the

treacherous Cork but England were into their sixth session in the field, and looking distinctly ragged, by the time Richardson, when 84, tried to play French cricket against Illingworth and was nimbly caught off bat and pad by Russell. Thorpe, Gallian and Illingworth all put down chances before, two overs later, a stumping and a run-out achieved what catches could not.

England's prospects of making 229 to avoid the follow-on did not look bright after Stewart's surrender and they might well have deteriorated further. In Adams's first over, acclimated with a standing ovation, Gallian lived dangerously. In his second, Gallian was missed, a sharp chance to Kirsten at short leg. The fairy tale was put on hold, and England breathed again.

PORT ELIZABETH SCOREBOARD

South Africa won toss	
SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings	
A C Hudson c Russell b Cork	31
G Kirsten c Thorpe b Illingworth	51
*W J Grogan c Atherton b Martin	49
D J Cullinan c Russell b Cork	81
J N Rhodes c Smith b Cork	49
B M McMillan c Russell b Illingworth	49
D J Richardson c Russell b Illingworth	84
S M Pollock lbw b Cork	28
Total (159.5 overs, 650 mins) 228	
ENGLAND: First Innings	
A A Donald not out	12
P R Adair not out (Gallian/Russell)	0
Extras (lb 11, nb 0)	19
Total (159.5 overs, 650 mins) 228	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-57 (Kirsten 25), 2-85 (Kirsten 48), 3-89 (Cullinan 1), 4-207 (Cullinan 87), 5-251 (McMillan 18), 6-325 (Richardson 39), 7-379 (Richardson 87), 8-406 (Matthews 11), 9-426 (Donald 1)	
BOWLING: Cork 43.2-12-113-4 (nb 10), 5-1-1-0, 7-4-1-1, 6-1-10-0, 5-0-25-1, 6-0-26-1, 5-9-0-0, 5-2-1-1, 4-2-7-0, 1-0-29-4-7-82-1 (7-3-10-0, 4-0-17-0, 5-2-16-1, 4-1-11-0, 8-1-26-0, 1-4-0-2-0), Martin 32.0-7-79-1 (17-2-20-0, 5-1-1-1, 5-1-9-0, 8-3-14-0, 3-1-4-0, 3-1-9-0, 3-0-12-0), Illingworth 39.5-8-105-3 (4-2-5-0, 10-3-25-0, 4-0-2-0, 12-3-29-1, 2-0-7-0, 7-5-0-18-2), Hick 12-2-32-0 (1-0-2-0, 3-0-5-0, 8-2-21-0), Gallian 2-0-6-0 (one spell), SCORING NOTES (second day) — Lunch: 316-5 (117 overs, 380 mins) — Under-16s, 45; Under-14s, 34; Free 396-7 (148 overs, 500 mins) Richardson 79, Matthews 3.	
ENGLAND: Second Innings	
*M A Atherton not out	15
A J Stewart c Richardson b Pollock 4	(5 mins, 2 balls, 1 four)
J E R Gallian not out	14
P R Adair not out	14
Extras (lb 3, w 1, nb 3)	7
Total (1 wk, 20 overs, 73 mins) 40	
SOUTH AFRICA: Second Innings	
G P Thorpe, G A Hick, R A Smith, J R C Russell, D G Cork, P J Martin, M C Ikin and R K Illingworth to bat	
FALL OF WICKET: 1-7 (Atherton 2)	
BOWLING: Donald 4-0-0-0 (nb 3, one spell), Pollock 5-3-1-1 (3-2-5-1, 2-1-1-0), Adams 7-2-16-0 (one spell), Matthews 4-2-6-0 (one spell).	
Umpires: S A Bucknor (West Indies) and C J Michely C N Lloyd (West Indies). Match referee: C H Lloyd (West Indies).	
RESULTS: First Test (Port Elizabeth) drawn. Second Test (Johannesburg), drawn. Third Test (Durban), drawn. TEST TO COME: Fifth (Cape Town), Jan 2 to 6.	

Muralitharan allowed to continue

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE Sri Lanka off spinner, Muralitharan, survived further scrutiny of his suspect action yesterday as Australia reached 500 for six at Melbourne on the second day of the second Test.

Muralitharan, who has been urged by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to alter his action after being no-balled seven times by Darrell Hair, the Australian umpire, on Tuesday, bowled 20 more overs without being called for throwing.

David Boon completed his 21st Test hundred and Steve Waugh hit an unbeaten 131 before the declaration. Sri Lanka replying with 29 for the loss of Roshan Mahanama.

After his troubles on Tuesday, Muralitharan operated entirely from the end of the New Zealand umpire, Steve Dunne, with Hair looking on from square leg, the position from which an umpire usually calls a bowler for throwing.

Anura Tennakoon, secretary of the Board of Control of Cricket in Sri Lanka, said he would approach the umpires at the end of the match. "We have to find out exactly from

the umpires why some deliveries were called as no-balls and why some were not. To be called in a Test match is rather harsh on a player. But the fact that it has been done means we will have to take some action."

Although Muralitharan did not add to the wicket of Mark Waugh he took in Tuesday's final session, he made some impact by holding catches to dismiss Boon and Ian Healy. Boon took 23 balls to score the seven runs he needed to complete his hundred but after he had gone for 110, made in just over six hours, the scoring rate improved.

Waugh, who needed a runner in the later stages of his innings because of a groin strain, got to his second Test century of the summer off 210 balls, with nine fours, having made an unbeaten 112 against Pakistan in the first Test in Brisbane last month.

The main crowd-pleaser, however, was Ricky Ponting, 20, who slammed 71, which included a six and nine fours from 94 balls.

Sri Lanka were badly let down by their fielding. Healy was missed in the deep off successive balls from

Aravinda de Silva, even though the fielders concerned, Vaas and Gurusinha, both got two hands to the ball. The wicketkeeper, Roshan Kaluwardhana also had a sorry day, fumbling two stumping chances.

Sri Lanka, left with 13 overs batting before the close, failed to emerge unscathed. Mahanama could not get his hat out of the way of a rising ball from McGrath and was well caught by Mark Taylor at first slip. It was the Australian captain's hundredth catch in Test cricket.

Steve Waugh: injured

Steve Waugh: injured

Steve Waugh: injured

Steve Waugh: injured

With Berkoff, not by him

Berkoff's Macbeth. Radio 4, 7.30pm.

I trust this sort of thing does not get out of hand. Not even Olivier dared proclaim his film as *Olivier's Henry V*. True, there was *Huckleberry's The Birds*, but that was because of the man's incurable eccentricity. So, David Benedict's terrific production is, give or take a few text cuts, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, with Berkoff's contribution limited to playing the bloody Thane of Cawdor. Some limitation! Berkoff's would-be throne-grabber is now a whispering, now a roaring, creature. A portrayal fashioned on the stage transfers impressively to radio. Berkoff's *Macbeth* economises on its witches. Cleo Laine plays all three.

Meridian, BBC World Service, 9.30pm.

After ten minutes of *Meridian's* literary quiz, I began wondering whether the panel should not have changed places with the audience who are a most knowledgeable lot. Fortunately the experts eventually pull themselves together and help their chairman Christopher Cook to wriggle off a hook on which he must have dangled uncomfortably. Those taking part are *Meridian* presenters Harriet Gilbert and Michael Rosen, journalist Michael Bywater and critic and novelist Susan Jeffreys. I did enjoy the quiz's novel-in-a-headline round. Of what classic would you say that "Sugar daddy was a badde, squeaky Pip" is a clever tabloid précis? No prizes for coming up with the correct answer. I'm afraid.

Peter Daville

RADIO 1

Full Stereo, 4.00am Claire Shogues
6.00am Simon Mayo 12.00am Nicky Campbell
3.00pm Dave Pearce 6.00pm Newsbeat
Review 95 7.00pm Evening Session
8.00pm Soundbite, with Derry Kelly 10.00pm
REM Live at the Bowl (if) 12.00am Mark
Tondal including at 12.15am The Net

RADIO 2

FM Stereo, 6.00am Roger Royle 6.15
Pause for Thought 7.30pm Wogan 9.15
News 2.30pm 9.30pm Ken Bruce
11.30pm Jimmy Young 2.00pm Debbie
Thrower 3.30pm Ed Stewart 5.05pm John
Dunn reflects on conversations with
more than 200 guests 7.30pm Change at
Oglethorpe, Comedy-drama series with
Peter Davison and Michael Williams
7.30pm David Allen with the best in country
music 8.00pm Paul Jones 9.45pm The Gospel
Train 10.30pm Martin Kellner 12.05am Sue
McCarthy including at 1.30pm Pause for
Thought 3.00am Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE

6.00am This Sporting Life in the Morning
(if) 6.05am Hold the Fort Page 7.00pm
The Breakfast Programme 8.35pm The Mag-
azine 10.10pm Gail Reaction, plus Euronews
11.05pm 11.55pm The 11.55pm News and
Presidents (20) 12.00pm Midday with Mark
12.34pm Moneycheck 1.15pm Entertainment
News 2.05pm Rascals on Five 4.00pm
John Inverdale Nationwide 7.00pm News
Edna 7.30pm On the Line 8.05pm Women of
Top 5.05pm SportsAmerica, from San
Francisco 10.05pm The Other Honour List
11.35pm Ages of Being 11.55pm Speed Out
12.05am Night Moves 2.05am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am Sandy Wax 7.00pm Simon Bates
10.00am Jonathan King 12.00pm Tommy
Boyd 2.00pm Anna Rasmussen 4.00pm Scott
Chisholm and Lowell Turner 7.00pm Sean
Bohag 9.00pm David Bell 10.00pm James
Whitley 1.00-4.00pm Ian Collins

WORLD SERVICE

All times in GMT, 5.00am Newsday
5.30pm Europe Today 6.00pm Newsday 6.30
Europe Today 7.00pm News 7.15pm Old
Shall 7.30pm Newsday 8.00pm News 8.10pm
Words of Faith 8.15pm Composer of
Month 8.45pm Good Books 9.00pm News in
German 9.15pm Sports International 9.45pm
Sport 10.00pm Newsday 10.30pm BBC
English 10.45pm Oil the Shell 11.00pm
Newsday 11.30pm Sinatra 12.00pm News
12.05pm Business 12.15pm Britain Today
12.30pm Assignment 1.00pm Newsday 2.00pm
News 2.30pm Outlook 2.30pm Multicast 3.00pm
News in German 3.15pm The Learning
World 3.30pm Network UK 4.00pm News 4.15pm
The World Today 4.30pm News in German
4.50pm Newsday 5.30pm Business 5.45pm
Sport 6.00pm Newsday 6.30pm News in
German 7.00pm Newsday 7.07pm
Outlook 7.25pm Words of Faith 7.30pm John
Red 8.00pm Newsday 8.00pm News 8.05pm
Business 9.15pm Britain Today 9.30pm
Meridian. See Choice 10.00pm Newsday
10.30pm The World Today 10.45pm Sport
11.00pm News 11.10pm Take Five 11.15pm
Network UK 11.45pm Health Matters
Midnight Newsday 12.30pm On the
Move 12.45pm Britain Today 1.00pm News
1.10pm Press 1.15pm Children of Angels 1.45pm
Global Concerns 2.00pm Newsday 2.30pm
Thirty-Minute Drama 3.00pm News 3.15pm
Sport 3.30pm Focus on Faith 4.00pm
Newsday 4.30pm Europe Today

CLASSIC FM

4.00am Mark Griffiths 6.00pm Nick Bailey
9.00am Mike Reid 12.00pm Suannah
Simons 2.00pm Lunchtime Family Con-
cert 3.00pm Jamie Chick 6.00pm Newsnight
6.30pm Sport 7.00pm The Travel Guide 10.00pm
York State 8.00pm Evening Concert 10.00pm
Michael Mappin 1.00am Sally Pearson

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00am Russ 'n' Jono 9.00pm Richard
Slater 12.00pm Graham Dene 4.00pm
Holly Haze 7.30pm David 10.00pm
Radio First 2.00-4.00pm Robin Barrie

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, with Penny Gore.
Paganini (Violin Concerto in B
minor), 6.25pm Symphony
Series: Mozart (Symphony No
40 in G minor), Rossini
(Overture, La Cenerentola);
Bach (The Well-Tempered
Clavier); 8.05pm Haydn (Piano
Sonata in G minor), Gounod
(Petite Symphonie in B flat)
9.00am Morning Collection with
Paul Lewis
Tchaikovsky, orch Stravinsky
(Bluebird Pas de Deux, The
Sleeping Beauty); Rossini (La
Cenerentola, excerpt);
Mozart (Piano Sonata in A
minor); Prokofiev (Cinderella,
Act 3)
10.00am Musical Encounters. Holst
(This Hymn I wrote for my true
love); Ravel (Shéhérazade);
Beethoven (Sonata in A flat);
Bach (Brandenburg Concerto
No 4 in G); 10.55pm Radio 3
(La belle dame same merci);
Frank Martin (Petite
Symphonie Concertante);
The Fortinbras in this hall
12.00pm Composer of the Week.
Saint-Saëns (Le Rouet
de Dymally; Violin Sonata No
1 in D minor; Le Déluge,
excerpts) (if)
1.00pm British Opera Matinee:
Tom Jones, recorded at the
Ordnung Festival in
Sweden. Drottningholm
Theatre Chorus and
Orchestra under Nicholas
McGegan perform. Franco
André Philidor's opera, based
on the novel by Henry
Fielding. With Judith Howarth
and Greg Fiddler. Sung in
English.
3.20pm Opus 20. Scott Stroman
conducts the chamber
orchestra in Copland (Norvay);
1.40pm The Archers (if) 1.55pm
Shipping Forecast
2.00pm News; Theo, by Moya
Clydesdale. Jarvis as a
1900 Stiff body who is
put up to auction by his latest
owner, Roland, a long-
distance lorry driver
3.30pm Kaleidoscope: Miller's
Tales (2/4) (if)
4.00pm News 4.05pm Radio Lives
John Everett (if)
4.45pm Christmas Story:
Dicky Doolittle, by Lynne
Bryan. Read by Charlotte
Cox
5.00pm PM 5.50pm Shipping Forecast
5.55pm Weather
6.00pm News 6.15pm It's Your Go!
Mandy Patinkin (2/4)
6.30pm Old Harry's Game. The best
of Andy Hamilton's
comedy series
7.00pm News 7.05pm The Archers
7.20pm Berkoff's Macbeth. See
Choice
9.30pm Kaleidoscope: Feature
on Brian Cooper on the British
film location industry (if) 9.55pm
Weather
10.00pm The World Tonight
10.45pm Book of the Week
from David O. Sebastian
Read by Henry Goodman
11.00pm Andy Bradbury Introduces
Tales of the British
Fruit at the Bottom of the
Bar, dramatised by Brian
Sibley (4/5)
11.30pm Ad Lib. Robert Robinson
finds out what it is like to live
in the shadow of fame (if)
12.00pm News, 12.27am Weather
12.30pm The Late Book: Mike
Smith's Feeling for Snow.
Read by Slobodan Redmond
(5/15)
12.45pm Shipping Forecast 1.00am
World Service

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping (LW) 6.00pm News
6.05pm Weather 8.10pm Farming
Today. Anna Hill looks at the
British wool industry 8.25pm
Prayer for the Day 8.30pm
Today, 8.30pm, 7.30pm, 7.30pm,
8.00pm, 8.30pm, 6.55pm, 7.55pm
Weather 7.25pm 8.25pm Sports
News 7.45pm Thought for the
Day
8.40pm A Christmas Carol, by
Charles Dickens. Read by
Richard Wilson (4/5) 8.55pm
Weather
9.00pm 10.00pm 11.00pm 4.00pm Test
Match Special (LW only)
South Africa v England in the
Fourth Test
9.00pm News (FM only) 9.05pm The
Moral Maze (FM)
10.00-10.30pm News: King Street
Junior (4/5) (if)
10.00pm Daily Service (LW only)
10.15pm Children's BBC Radio 4: A
Ghost for Christmas.
Edward De Souza reads The
Investigation by David Bohan
10.30pm Walters's Festive Frolics.
John Walters has a relaxing
break at a retreat in Dorset
NB: The following are on FM only
until 4pm.
11.00pm News: Please Leave a
Message after the Bleep.
Simon Pateson on the science
of sound and the psychology
behind the siren
11.30pm At Bertram's Hotel, by
Agatha Christie. With June
Whitfield as Miss Marple (4/5)
12.00pm News: Trumpion Rites.
Sally James recalls Blue Peter
and Magazine in the 1970s
12.25pm Wordly Wise. Peter
Hobday is joined by
Germane Greer, Simon Brett,
Loraine King and Richard
Silgoff 12.55pm Weather
1.00pm The World at One (FM, LW)

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1, FM 97.8-99.8. RADIO 2, FM 89.0-90.2. RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.0. LW 94.0-96.0. WORLD SERVICE, MW 648-720. RADIO 5 LIVE, MW 693, 698, 900. CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.8, MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO UK, MW 1053, 1059. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Gillian Mewey, Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson

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Newcastle's Premiership lead cut to seven points after defeat at Old Trafford

United bask
in Cole's
warm glowManchester United 2
Newcastle United 0BY ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

SO THE race for the FA Carling Premiership title is all over, trussed up by Newcastle United before the Christmas turkey? Do not make Manchester United laugh. They had over 42,000 witnesses last night to their own defiance. Manchester United were the winners by more than the goals scored by Andy Cole and Roy Keane.

Giggs gave them sheer class. Keane gave them strength and versatility. Cantona gave them captaincy and responsibility... and they cut the Newcastle lead to a manageable seven points. Newcastle's only excuse was the early injury that forced Gillespie out of the contest after a quarter of an hour, but for them, now comes the test of character. Manchester United, playing for their championship season, depended on speed and craft and sheer tenacious willpower.

There were long and tedious hours trying to park before radio here live, as one might have expected. For this was the showdown between the Frenchman, Ginola and Cantona, the captain for the first time in his career with Manchester United. How he wore the armband, swaggering with determination to

command the pace of the game from his position just behind Cole.

A few days ago, he had given blood, and required six stitches in the colours of Manchester United at Elland Road. Now he would give a personal impersonation of an outcast made leader.

As early as the fifth minute he spreadeagled Newcastle's black and white lines with a penetrating through ball for Keane. The Irishman, himself in resurgent, powerful form after recovering from his hernia operation, was bravely closed down by Peacock.

A clash of the titans. Peacock won the ball with his body, and even on the ground won the ricochet.

It served only to turn up the turbo boost of Manchester. They had gambled by thrusting Giggs into the game

despite his recent foot injury. They needed his pace, needed his touch of genius.

He provided both in the sixth minute, finishing his run with such precise power, hitting the ball across the white, frosty surface for the lurking Cole.

And Cole, a player struggling to fulfil expectations at Old Trafford, suddenly finished with unhesitating precision of his own, driving the ball right-footed past the stranded Smeick and just inside the penalty area. It was his fifth goal of the season, his second in successive games, and it was a touch that one might almost say was worth £7 million.

Manchester United were full of purpose and legitimate aggression. If Newcastle are, as their supporters have begun to sing, the real United, the pretenders to the crown, they were going to have to work through minefields of explosive challenges to win this match.

Keane, so irrepressible when he channels his fire this way, had Butt at his side but the younger man was more than just an apprentice. His tackles snapped into the heels of Beardsley and Lee. For all their experience and class, the Newcastle pair could not find breathing space. Neither could Ginola, who was smothered by Irwin, playing at right back in this reshuffled Manchester rearguard.

Inside him, Gary Neville, the England full back, was manfully sharing with May responsibility for policing Ferdinand.

They did it well. For almost half an hour, Ferdinand was an isolated forward, no one in his team finding the time, the room, the inspiration to get up in support.

And on the break Giggs was still taunting the Newcastle defence. Barton was booked in the 21st minute for a foul on him. And when, 14 minutes later, referee Alcock showed the yellow card for a second time, he momentarily lost the plot. It was, in fact, Beardsford who received this booking, but



Ginola, left, gets his pass away under pressure from Beckham during the FA Carling Premiership match at Old Trafford yesterday

both full backs are blond, and Alcock showed the red card to Beardsford, then realised his error, put the card back in his pocket, and was left with a face of the same hue.

But the match still pulsated. Ferdinand came out of his isolation before half-time when Howey drove perceptively through the midfield. The pass from Howey, the timing from Ferdinand, deflected Manchester's offside intent. It left Ferdinand one-on-one against Smeickel. The position was similar to that in which the Ghanaian,

Tony Yeboah, had chipped Smeickel for Leeds last Saturday.

Ferdinand is an Englishman, a prolific one, but not as imaginative as the African. He drove hard and low, straight at the advancing Smeickel, and the ball deflected to safety off the goalkeeper's right calf. Moments after that, Ginola, for once finding space on the right, produced a spectacular, outswinging cross, though not as spectacular as the wonderful leap and stretch of Smeickel to catch it.

One more muscular mo-

ment of Ferdinand, wrestling May to the ground just on half-time, threatened to upset Manchester United's equilibrium. Because May could not recover from a thigh injury, Keane had to step back into the defence, with McClair coming into midfield.

If it mattered to anyone, it was not Keane. Five minutes into the second half, Giggs had struck the Newcastle crossbar, but Manchester were not in the mood to be repelled by anything. Moments after that Philip Neville crossed the ball from the left

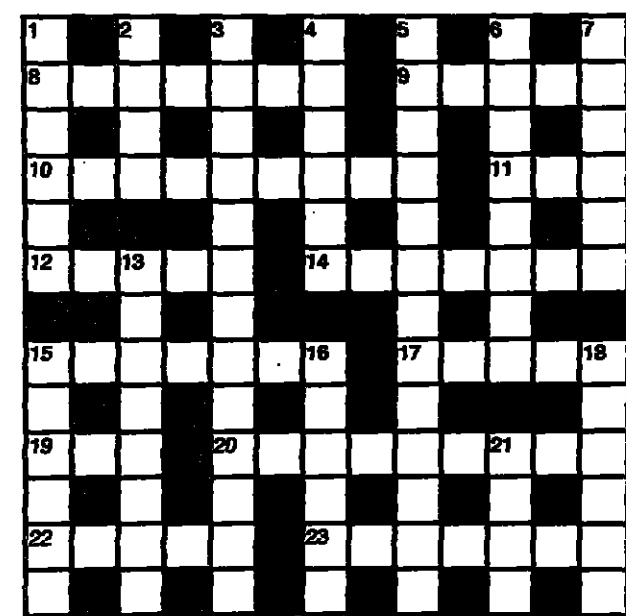
flank and who should be there beyond the far post but Keane. He was not marked at all and he needed one touch to control the moving ball, the second to volley it uncompromisingly past Smeickel, whose demeanour was that of a paralysed, startled rabbit.

Had Cole not misfired with a third goal at his mercy, Newcastle would be down and out.

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-1-1): P. Smeickel — D. Irwin, D. May (sub: B. McClair, 48min), G. Neville, P. Neville — D. Beardsford, R. Keane, N. Butt, R. Giggs — E. Cantona — A. Cole.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (4-1-4-1): P. Smeickel — W. Barton, D. Peacock, S. Howey, J. Beardsford — L. Park — K. Gillespie (sub: S. Watson, 15), R. Lee, P. Beardsley, D. Ginola — L. Forster.

Referee: P. Alcock.
Celtic have added a new dimension to their burgeoning youth policy by inviting Heini Otto, the Ajax coach, to help to train some of their young players. Otto was in Scotland yesterday and assisted the Parkhead managerial team of Tommy Burns and Billy Stark in coaching youngsters between the ages of eight and 14. Otto coaches the youthful Ajax team, which captured the European Cup last season.

TIMES TWO
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8 Greed (7)
9 Tropical climbing plant (5)
10 Like a wild party (9)
11 The Flood rescue vessel (3)
12 — Marner (George Eliot) (5)
14 Instructor (7)
15 Discriminating eater (7)
17 Aus. wild dog (5)
19 Killer whale; sea monster (3)
20 Ridiculous (9)
22 Group of flying geese (5)
23 Pip's love (Great Expectations) (7)
- DOWN
1 Very well-known (6)
2 Douglas —, Flanders C-in-C (4)
3 Taking to pieces (13)
4 Work for seven players (6)
5 Non-colour (TV); (in) down-right terms (5-3-5)
6 Longest footrace (8)
7 One on foot; frame for toddler (6)
13 Rocket-firing device (8)
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16 Hairpiece (6)
18 (Street) with no contrailow (3-3)
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SOLUTION TO No 662
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13 Tudor 15 Slush 16 Bench 18 Mediator 21 Footnote 22 Darn
23 Zephyr 24 Tiptoe
DOWN: 1 Codify 2 Pathogen 3 Sigma 5 Fancy that 6 Only 7 Tether
11 Hush money 12 Round 14 Disrupt 16 Budzif 17 Prince
19 Inept 20 Soup

Eastern promise in England agenda

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

ENGLAND have arranged international matches against Bulgaria, Croatia and Hungary, all at Wembley, in the run-up to the European football championship finals next year. It is a schedule full of Eastern promise, particularly the challenges presented by Bulgaria and Croatia, and should give Terry Venables, the England coach, an accurate guide to his side's progress before the serious business begins.

Bulgaria visit on March 27, Croatia on April 24 and Hungary on May 18. England will then take a break before embarking on a six-day mini-tour, possibly to South Africa or the United States, to conclude their competitive preparations for the start of the finals on June 8, when they play Switzerland.

David Davies, director of public affairs at the Football Association, said: "The priority has been to get what the England coach wants, in terms of matches and the balance of the programme. Terry wants to get it just right and he's very happy with the matches."

Hungary failed miserably in their European championship qualifying campaign, but their players will be keen to impress in the inevitable rebuilding process aimed at the World Cup qualifying series. Bulgaria and Croatia are likely to place greater emphasis on all-round acclimatisation and perhaps even damage limitation. Bulgaria, World Cup

semi-finalists last year, possess some of the most talented individuals in Europe, led by the moody and unpredictable Hristo Stoichkov.

Croatia, also European championship finalists, will provide a similar examination of England's credentials. They were due to play at Wembley on September 6 but the match was cancelled because of the conflict in the Balkans, with England instead playing Colombia. "The peace settlement in the area has now removed any worries on that front," Davies said.

Northern Ireland have an impressive list of forthcoming fixtures at Windsor Park. They meet Norway on March 27, Sweden on April 24 and Germany on May 29, and hope that Holland will agree to visit on June 4.

Stewart's worrying run continues

FROM SIMON WILDE
IN PORT ELIZABETH

ENGLAND'S cricketers face an arduous task to stay in contention in the fourth Test match after a gruelling and frustrating second day at St George's Park yesterday. Kept in the field for 11 hours while South Africa scored 428, they then lost Alec Stewart in Shaun Pollock's first over before Michael Atherton and Jason Gallian, not without alarms, saw them through to 40 for one by the close.

Stewart's unnecessary dismissal, caught at the wicket chasing a ball outside off stump, continued a sorry sequence. He last recorded a half-century in Test cricket 16 months and 15 innings ago.

Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, responded by quickly calling up Paul Adams into the attack. The left-arm wrist spinner, the youngest South African to appear in Test cricket, began with two maiden overs and had Gallian dropped at short leg before he had scored. With the ball



Hott: strained thigh

starting to keep low on a pitch promising turn, England's hopes of remaining on level terms are under threat. England were also concerned by an injury during the afternoon session to Mark Hott, who pulled up with a strain in his left thigh in the course of his thirtieth over. Hott left the field and did not return. It is feared that the injury will restrict his movement for the remainder of the game and, with the final

match of the series starting on Tuesday, he must be doubtful for the Cape Town Test match. If Hott is incapacitated, there will be an unexpected opportunity for Darren Gough or Angus Fraser to re-establish himself in the Test side. Neither has played in the Tests since the match in Johannesburg nearly four weeks ago and Fraser might have expected not to play again on the tour.

After Cape Town, several players will be sent home before a series of seven one-day internationals starts on January 9. Three limited-overs specialists joined the England party yesterday: Neil Fairbrother, Dermot Reeve and Neil Smith. England partly had themselves to blame for their long stay in the field yesterday. As heat and tiredness took their toll they missed six catches, most of them clear-cut and all off the unfortunate Illingworth, who dropped two sharp returns himself. None of the misses proved expensive but the cumulative effect

was to add to England's frustrations.

Ironically, many of the catches England held were outstanding, Russell in particular having another excellent day. He finished with four catches, one stumping and a part in the run-out of Adams. Nor did Russell, who created a world Test record with 11 catches in the Johannesburg Test match, concede any byes during an innings that occupied 159.5 overs.

England's uphill battle 38
Throwing row subsides 38

England will play two Test matches and three one-day internationals over the Christmas period during their first tour of Zimbabwe next year. (TIMES: Nov 26; Outlook: Future South Country Club, Dec 1; President's XI (Haram Sports Club), Dec 2-3; Mashonaland (Haram Sports Club), Dec 8; Midlands (Queen's Club), Dec 10-12; Matabeleland (Queen's Club), Dec 13-15; First one-day international (Queen's Club), Dec 15-16; First Test (Queen's Club), Dec 20-22; Second Test (Haram Sports Club), Jan 1; Second one-day international (Haram Sports Club), Jan 3; Third one-day international (Haram Sports Club).

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